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School to work

Employers told to foot bill for under-18 apprentices

by Mark Jackson

A battle has begun between some education authorities and employers over who should pay for further education courses for apprentices and other young trainees. Most authorities until now have waived fees for all trainees under 18, although they have charged the employers—usually the industrial training boards—60 per cent of the cost for older students.

But a growing number of authorities are telling the boards that they will have to pay the 60 per cent for the under-18s, too. At least one county, Hampshire, is now charging the full fee for day-release students. Some of the boards have complained to the Department of Education and Science and employers have written to their MPs.

The Construction Industry Training Board this week accused authorities such as Hampshire of breaking a formal agreement reached between the education service and the boards eight years under which the authorities took responsibility for providing the educational component of courses while the employers paid for the vocational training instruction. This was the basis for the 40-60 per cent split.

But at a time when most colleges were eager to expand their course numbers most of the authorities decided to waive their right to be paid the 60 per cent for the under-18s, treating them on the same basis as other further education students.

An Association of County Councils officials said this week that the fees had been waived under a gentlemen's agreement, and that there was evidence from various parts of the country that the agreement was breaking down under the pressure of financial cuts. The association did not know of any other counties which were going as far as Hampshire.

Hampshire education department said that it was charging the full-course cost for part-time students this year as part of its economy measures, but it had not been decided whether it would be a permanent policy. "We have had the DES and various other people asking questions about it," said an official.

In a submission for the review of the 1978 Employment and Training Act which is now being carried out by the Manpower Services Commission, the construction ITB says that the 1971 agreement to divide responsibility for the fees has tended to crystallize the artificial distinction between further education and training and has increased the pressure by some I.E.A.s to get the boards to pay the fees for the under-18s.

The board wants the Government to pay for all basic training and complementary FE courses through the DES and the Scottish Education Department, although it does not make clear whether this would mean a specific grant.

The board says that there should be uniformity throughout the

country on the method of payment; but the board has some control over which could escalate if only to state bureaucratic what and how much has been done.

Although the submission, nominally to the Manpower Services Commission, the board is also making a case for training. It calls for all training to be handed over to the Government of Employment.

But the CITB is urging the cost of training should be spread across all industry—a principle which was put forward by the three years ago but abandoned because of opposition from the federation of British industry. Such collective funding was introduced, the board says, should be compensated by a cheque for training they carry out for other sectors.

The board is also demanding its own scope should be to cover the training of central government buildings and the nationalised industries of architects, surveyors, and building engineers. It also wants to be given the right to decide what to pay for their own training to get Government approval.

Manpower teams blacked over choice of members

Some education authorities are boycotting the Government's district manpower committees because the Manpower Services Commission insists teacher unions choose the education service members.

The commission is inviting the National Association of Teachers in Further Education and the Association of College Principals to nominate the education representatives for the committees, which consist largely of employers and union representatives, together with civil servants. The Association of County Councils has protested strongly to the commission's chairman, Sir Richard O'Brien, who has refused to give way.

The association says that the MSC steering group on which it served recommended that each committee should have two education representatives, suggested that

they might be an assistant director for further education and a college principal, with the principal careers officer acting as the chief education officer approved.

Northamptonshire is forbidding its officers to attend its local committee and has told college principals to turn down any invitation to join it. Principals are also refusing to give any of their teaching staff leave to attend a committee meeting. The county council is urging other East Midlands authorities to do the same.

An ACC official said the association had drawn the attention of its member authorities to Northampton's action. "We have simply asked them to consider what action they want to take, but a number, not only in the Midlands are adopting the same approach as Northamptonshire."

More equality urged for youth programme

Unless schemes for the Youth Opportunities Programme are urged in this week's report by a joint working party of the Manpower Services Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission.

The working party has found that so far YOP is repeating the pattern of the MSC's earlier work experience programme, in which most girls went to traditionally female work in offices and the service industries. And while there are the same number of girls as boys in the programme, they make up only 22 per cent of the trainees in industry-based work experience and 27 per cent of those in training workshops—the kind of schemes which are much more likely to provide purposeful training and education.

The working party wants equal provision for girls and boys in all schemes, and encouragement to girls to gain practical work experience on projects, in workshops, and to take short industrial courses. It also wants the working party should work in mixed groups, and all tasks or training modules should

be open to both sexes. Large teams should preferably include at least two boys and two girls. Where it is difficult to create mixed schemes, sponsors should be encouraged to create schemes to introduce girls to non-traditional work.

The working party says it is important for girls on the programme to have access to further education, because once they are in permanent jobs they do not usually get day release.

Courses designed to compensate for a lack of maths and science, or an introduction to science and technology, should be encouraged. A further recommendation is that a further recommendation is that community service schemes, under which boys and girls get experience in child care should be used to help mothers in the Special Temporary Programme, which provides temporary work for the unemployed.

The report points out that some of the under-18s in YOP may already be wives and mothers who need child care facilities, flexible hours, and other kinds of help with domestic responsibilities in the same way as the adult women.

MSC tries to cut without killing

Aid for unemployed school-leavers next year will depend largely on the agreement for the complete beginning of the Manpower Services Commission's new Youth Opportunities Programme.

On Tuesday the commission met to decide how to meet to the Government's target of 3,400 in their staff of 4,000. They will be told that the MSC will be reduced to 3,400 by the end of the year. The commission's target is to reduce the number of staff by 600 by the end of the year.

The additional YOP staff will only be found at the expense of other MSC activities, which are being cut. The commission is trying to cut the number of staff by 600 by the end of the year.

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SPORT

Robert, 15, trains for Olympics

by Stanley Levenson

Robert Daw, a pupil at Gordano Comprehensive School, Bristol, will spend the next few months studying for A levels and for an Olympic medal in figure skating.

Robert, aged 15, will compete in the Olympic Games, world and European championships between June and mid March.

His partner will be Susan Garland, aged 13, who is also at Gordano School. Together they retained their British pairs title at the end of November and were immediately chosen for their first major international appearances.

It was expected that they would go only to the less-rigorous European championships at Goteborg, Sweden, next month but the selectors have chosen them for the Olympics at Lake Placid, New York, a few weeks later, and the world event in Dortmund, West Germany, in March.

It is a reward not only for Susan and Robert but also for the school, which has helped them train and compete while still getting essential education. It was because of this that Susan transferred from another school to Gordano, where Robert was already enrolled.

Mr J. C. S. Weeks, the headmaster,



Robert Daw: to skate in three competitions.

said he was delighted at their success. "We work together so that Susan and Robert are able to achieve what they can in skating while protecting their educational needs." He said that Robert came straight back from the national championships to tackle his mock "O" levels.

Susan and Robert came together three years ago as an ice dance combination before switching to figure skating. They train four hours a day, starting at the crack-of-dawn.

Their choreographer is a former member of the Young Generation dance group, and the couple go to discos together.

Susan will be at 13 the youngest British competitor at Lake Placid, probably younger than any of the team going to Moscow in July, but she will not be the youngest in the event's history. In the 1932 Winter Games, also at Lake Placid, Cecilia Colledge was only 11. Five years later she won the world figure skating championship.

Mid-ability tennis players get tournament of their own

A new tennis tournament has been launched for middle-ability players aged under 16. The venture, which will cover 16 major towns and cities, is under the auspices of the Lawn Tennis Foundation, and sponsored by Intersport, the sports retail marketing group.

The tournament is for the boy or girl who already plays tennis, but who has no thought of competition and may be unaware of existing local tournaments.

Mr Jim Coates, assistant manager of the foundation, said that the tournament, great roots scheme was set up to get young people interested in the game. Some 40,000 took advantage of the grass roots scheme last summer and already children are showing through who show promise.

A stage above this is the Nettle tournament, which is restricted to schools, and the Coca-Cola tournament for under-15s, which is limited to the Midlands, the North and Wales. At the other end of the scale is the Seabreeze tournament for the young elite.

In between are the robusts, many playing for fun, who have no real help in improving their tennis. There will be knockout tournaments in the forward to national finals at Lillesham National Recreation Centre next October.

The chosen towns are Bradford, Cambridge, Cardiff, Coventry, Derby, Gloucester, Hull, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Norwich, Oxford, Peterborough, Plymouth, Portsmouth. Competitors must live close to school or work in the town. There is a bar on any boy or girl who has played at junior international or senior county level.

Other countries, where Intersport has interests, will stage similar tournaments and it is intended within four years to hold an international final for national winners.

Membership of the BSJA has increased by a third this year and the senior body has attracted its share of new members too.

Judo rivals find peace is good for business

The new relationship between the British School's Judo Association and the British Judo Association, its governing body, has led to increased business by both organizations says Mr Geoff Edmondson, the schools secretary.

Until late last year the connection between the BSJA and the BJA was unclear and often led to bitterness and conflict of interest. Both, for example, promoted schools championships of some sort.

Now that the schools association is directly affiliated to the senior body the friction has gone. The BJA runs the national under-18 championships for boys and girls, and the BSJA organizes the national team championships for individual schools.

The 1979 team event will be held next Saturday, December 15, at the Sports Centre in Alder, Hampshire. Many of the competitors will have taken part in the under-18 championships held at Crystal Palace in early November.

Membership of the BSJA has increased by a third this year and the senior body has attracted its share of new members too.

Industry needs languages, heads told

by Bob Doe

Where detailed reports were required, professional translators should be used. He criticized the existing traditional exams in foreign languages. They told an employer little about an ability to speak them. Employers were not interested in an employee's knowledge of French literature.

Asked by heads if universities would accept lower A level grades if a candidate had continued the language studies, Dr Anthony Kelly, Surrey University's Vice-Chancellor, criticized his fellow heads for not being more realistic.

The managing director of Spillers International, Mr Leslie Thorogood, said a conference at Surrey University had agreed that fluency was the most important skill for managers, technicians, and professional working abroad.

The language target does not have to be high. You just have to be able to understand what is said and be understood yourself. A foreign language is a necessary skill for many jobs.

A new proposal for an intermediate exam between O and A levels was welcomed by Mr David Phillips from the University of Oxford. In modern languages, he said, those should test a wide range of language skills but with priority being given to listening and reading with understanding.

The AO level, offered by the Oxford and Cambridge exam board

in French and German for business use went some way towards meeting the needs of the non-specialist linguist in the sixth form.

Mr Roy Potter, Chief Education Officer for West Sussex, said no one could be helped by the present state of modern languages in schools. HM inspectors had talked of small groups and mediocre standards. The dropout rate between the first year of the secondary school, when nearly 90 per cent began a foreign language, and the 10 per cent who finally ended up with an O level, was like the casualty rate at Passchendaele.

To the industrialists, he said, "action speaks louder than words." It would have a great effect if they made it plain in their recruitment that foreign language skills were required.

A major disincentive to languages learning was the poor language skills of some language teachers. The most effective way of teaching a language is through cumulative, correct usage," he said. "As we seek to establish a modern language in the core curriculum to protect ourselves from our own inadequacies," he added.

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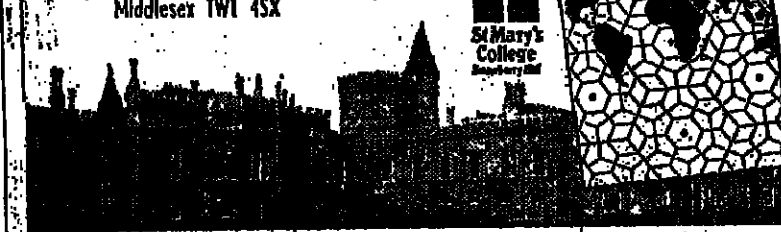
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LETTERS

Harsh words and callous disregard for Warnock

...and Forbes got his free period this week.

account. Add to this the weekly accounts, the banking and the extra work involved in the finance department and it seems doubtful if much money would be saved unless the charge is to be so great that nursery education will be only for the well off!

When will we see paying cases? When the child still in the nursery has its fifth birthday? Will the rising fives in the reception class be the first to bring home five? I have not heard it suggested that the parents of children over 16, for whom school is not statutory, should pay . . . so why the under-fives?

Thatcher, in the 1972 White Paper "Framework for Expansion" rejected the idea and it has been said that she more recently again took this stand. Let's hope this is true.

MARGARET GODFREY,
14 St. James's Drive,
London, SW17.

under-fives throughout the country; but only little more than one tenth of the money needed to accommodate them for even two terms is now left in the estimates.

It is to be hoped that if the County Councils Association recommendation to allow charging for nursery education is incorporated in the New Education Bill, some safeguards for nursery education, as we now know it will be incorporated as well.

JANET TODD (Mrs.),
City and County Councillor,
Shorliff of Oxford.

which shall be our first subject of study but we expect them to be in the field of education.

ascertain what specialist assistance might be available to them in their investigations, and I have therefore written to a number of institutions asking if and how they are able to help. But the committee would also like to hear from any individual

and other organisations who feel they can have the necessary expertise, and I am therefore seeking the hospitality of your columns to make this request.

CHRISTOPHER PRICE MP,
Chairman,
Education, Science and Arts Committee.

Committee,
House of Commons.

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Battle of the century?

The current inquiry into the future of the Vale of Belvoir raises issues that will crucially affect the lives of the next generation. John Herington reports on the ways schools are tackling this key environmental question.

The public inquiry into the National Coal Board's planning application to mine coal in the Vale of Belvoir opened at Stoke Rochford, Hall, near Grantham, on October 30. The inquiry is regarded by conservationists as perhaps the most important this century. Already it has attracted national press and television coverage. More significantly, it has become a catalyst for educational and research developments, especially in geography and planning, which raise interesting questions apart from whether or not to mine the coal itself.

The immediate battle is between those who propose mining coal—the National Coal Board and the National Union of Mineworkers—and those who oppose it—the so-called "Alliance", which includes the Vale of Belvoir Protection Group, the Vale of Belvoir Parish Councils' Committee and the National Farmers' Union.

The broad arguments on both sides have been known for some time and are fully discussed elsewhere (*Geographical Magazine*, February 1978). Planning applications were submitted in July 1978, but a year previously the National Coal Board issued two consultants' reports (Belvoir Prospect, June 1977) which showed how the different mining and environmental factors had been taken into account in arriving at a final preferred solution.

The North East Leicestershire Coalfield covers an area of some 234 sq. km (91 sq. miles). More than 75 per cent of the field lies beneath Leicestershire, with the remainder underlying Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. There are three proposed mine sites, all in Leicestershire. The first, actually located in the Vale of Belvoir, is at Asfordby and Selby, lying to the south and east on the perimeter of

the coalfield. The Vale of Belvoir is a flat, generally low-lying area with rather limited tree cover. To the south of the Vale is an attractive marlstone escarpment known as the Harby Hills—which extends east to Belvoir Castle, home of the Duke of Rutland.

Put simply, the main issues hinge on, first, whether it is necessary to mine coal at all, taking into account the current energy situation and likely changes in the market for coal; and second, whether it is necessary to mine coal at the sites being proposed in Belvoir. Here the argument is directed much more towards the so-called environmental impact of the mines and their associated waste tips, and also the social implications which may result from the migration of miners and their families into the area.

Although national interest focuses on the inquiry, there is considerable interest in the educational spin-off, especially, although not exclusively, in the geography and planning fields. This is probably far greater now than ever was the case at the time of the other major coalfield development at Selby, Yorkshire. Interest to date may represent only the tip of an iceberg (or coalfield?), which extends through to colleges, polytechnics and universities. The Regional Public Relations Office of the National Coal Board is still dealing with a large number of requests for information, and resource material about the Belvoir issue. About 50 per cent come from schools, mainly in Leicestershire and elsewhere in the East Midlands, while the remainder are mainly from students or academics in higher education all over the country.

The two main parties to the dispute, the National Coal Board and the "Alli-

ance" groups, have become heavily and perhaps at times unwillingly involved in the dissemination of information which finds its way into the classroom or lecture theatre. Most of this is given freely and can help publicise the main arguments being put forward by either side. Both groups provide speakers in schools and assist field work parties in the Vale.

Both groups appear to have been constrained by the stage which the argument has reached. The National Coal Board has been able to talk to children mainly about the national energy considerations involved rather than the more sensitive proposals as such. Likewise the protection groups have been careful not to give too much of their detailed case away.

Zena Stansbie, lecturer in education at Loughborough University, is vice-chairwoman of the Vale of Belvoir Parish Councils' Committee and largely responsible for developing links with the schools. She argues that the educational concern has been very worthwhile not only for "spreading the message," but also because it has led to feedback to the protection groups. She has found time to gather together a considerable volume of interesting resource material and is ready to offer advice to teachers about its use in the classroom.

Major environmental issues such as committing to Belvoir or new motorway proposals or nuclear power stations provide an obvious inspiration for educational inquiry, but there are some difficulties to be faced by teachers. The decision-making process and the existence of role-playing agencies inevitably affect the scope and content of the material made available.

The National Coal Board and the protection groups have published their own

press summaries and news supplements which, taken by themselves, provide a biased basis for debate and discussion. Those in search of an impartial, comprehensive or independent presentation of the Belvoir issue will have to make one up for themselves. However, another view is that by using this material school children may gain insight into the social processes involved in arriving at decisions which affect the whole community.

At sixth form level, it is the impact of coal and especially the environmental impact of mining which arouses interest. Some schools have arranged debates to argue the pros and cons of the development. More ambitious activities here include the simulation of the process of site selection and the nature of the planning process itself.

The essential materials for classroom exercises include simple maps of the Belvoir area, showing such elements as relief, land quality, woods, settlements, communication, industry and population change. By dividing the coalfield into a number of grid squares, for example, children can be asked to "survey" those areas they consider unsuitable for mining, possibly using the environmental criteria defined by the National Coal Board (Belvoir Prospect, June 1977).

These include nearness to communications and services, distance from sites of ecological or agricultural value, avoidance of settlement or agricultural landscape and so on. Interesting comparisons can be made with the proposals being put forward in the inquiry. Similar types of exercise involve the children in role-playing different interest groups: the National Union of Mineworkers, the National

Board, the National Farmers Union, local employers, commentators, for example, and simulating a "mock" public inquiry.

While the problem-based approach is relevant at sixth form level it is probably less amenable to the 13-16 age range. Here schools are introducing the Belvoir issue in the context of "environmental studies" or systematic studies of particular resources, like coal or agriculture, as in economic geography. Other areas include basic locational geography, transport geography, studies of landforms and landscape impacts and the effects on

social life in the rural community.

A group of local teachers from schools in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire have set a precedent for this approach by working within the Schools Council Geography 14-16 Project to develop a coursework unit based upon a study of the Selby coalfield. The assessment of the likely visual effects of development forms a section of this unit; for example, tips, winding gear, subsidance, loss of farmland, pylons, new roads. A further element involves the children calculating distance from coal-mines to the power stations by different forms of transport—a key issue at Belvoir, where Central Electricity Generating

Board Trent Valley stations will use the coal and British Rail spur lines are to be opened up.

Although there are examples where Belvoir has become a focus of teaching interest in schools, there is little doubt that the development of a coordinated provision of resource material for classroom use. The immediate way forward is likely to involve the development of resource packs containing field exercises and class work and covering many of the topics mentioned.

A strong lead by teachers in the East Midlands using existing expertise in the

region might be a useful way to fill this gap. In the longer term, looking to the time when Belvoir is open, what is needed is a model of the linkages between major environmental developments and their implications for classroom use.

The battle for the Vale of Belvoir may be taking place in Stoke Rochford Hall, but the task of capitalizing on the educational potential of the Belvoir controversy needs to be tackled at once.

John Herington is lecturer in geography at Loughborough University. He is a qualified planner and has given several talks and broadcasts on the Belvoir issue.

Builders, for more phonic development. The children marked their own work and chronicled their progress in specially prepared booklets.

Here, motivation was not a problem. The SRA Rate Builders were the highlight of the week. Pupils revelled in the competitive element aroused by the three-minute time limit. The exercise became a race to see who could finish his card, turn it over, fold his arms and smile smugly around the classroom.

This enthusiasm was deceptive: it actually marred some children's progress. On my last Friday I watched carefully as Christopher "finished" his card in some fifty seconds without a single correct answer. In the next exercise, I insisted that he check his answers before finishing his card. After two minutes' he looked at me with desperation (most of the class had finished). All five answers were now correct.

This simple experiment reinforced my doubts: the system might work for bright children, but the less able felt a stigma if they took too long. Furthermore, the punctuation exercises set by the teacher were made unnecessarily tedious because of the irrelevance of their context. The children had to put this passage into two sentences: "The Gulf Stream has an important effect upon our climate; it brings warm water to our shores from the Gulf of Mexico." It would require little imagination to put such exercises into the children's more immediate experience.

English was treated in two ways. The first comprised a series of worksheets drafted by the teacher himself, concentrating upon punctuation and spelling. The second was the SRA Reading Laboratory, which divides into Rate Builders, for quick comprehension, and Power

self on a commercial four-box set of cards, each box representing approximately one year's work. The system pays particular attention to base numeracy and fundamental concepts of geometry and symmetry. If it has a weakness, it is that it neglects basic computation, but this is counteracted by an occasional lesson in traditional maths given by the teacher.

From the pupils' point of view the chief obstacle to success in maths was a lack of motivation. For these children mathematics could offer only an endless horizon of further worksheets. All too often I discovered children deliberately labouring over a card so as not to have to start another; and the incentive offered by the excitement of a new colour-code wore thin very quickly.

Motivation was always stronger in the morning, but many maths lessons were scheduled for the afternoon. Another problem was the reading ability required to complete a card. Of course, technical terms were never introduced without prior explanation, but children's memories were notoriously short, and few children would willingly go back to check a previous card.

English was treated in two ways. The first comprised a series of worksheets drafted by the teacher himself, concentrating upon punctuation and spelling. The second was the SRA Reading Laboratory, which divides into Rate Builders, for quick comprehension, and Power

Are you still stuck on orange?

A student teacher recalls some alarming experiences down in the worksheet jungle

It is easy to see why the style of much mixed-ability teaching involves the use of worksheets. Children progress at their own level and pace, and learn by discovery; the teacher can afford more time for one-to-one tuition. In spite of these obvious advantages, my own limited experience in primary school casts doubt on whether such ideals work in practice.

"Foxgrove School" prides itself upon high academic achievement. Although it boasts some "remedial" classes, these are avoidance of settlement or agricultural landscape and so on. Interesting comparisons can be made with the proposals being put forward in the inquiry. Similar types of exercise involve the children in role-playing different interest groups: the National Union of Mineworkers, the National

in mathematics the school has sold its



16

Getting yourself across



'It took me a bit of time to realise that the only honest way of doing the job was to be myself'.
Gerald Haigh ponders on the trials of a new headteacher

Five terms ago I became head of a 350-pupil middle school. Most teachers want to be heads, I suppose. I did, and now might be as good a time as any to assess the reality by comparison with the 17-year dream that went before.

As soon as I got the job—three months before taking it up—I began to be apprehensive about the problems and responsibilities. In fact during those months I deliberately set out to savour the euphoria, knowing and yawning to the throat in the manner of a man appointed to lead a Kamikaze mission.

"The problems will come soon enough, I suppose," I said time and time again to my headmaster friends. "They will! They will!" came the answering chant, like the spooky utterances that come from behind carbon dioxide smoke at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

The ghostly chorus uttered other spells, too, such as: "If you want to change anything, don't wait too long." The implication, I suppose, is that if you leave things to begin to solidify until it becomes impossible to do anything. One of the most basic things I have realised over the past 18 months is that this is a gross oversimplification.

What is important is that you demonstrate right from the start the kind of person you are rather than the kind of person you want to be. If this message gets across, then changes which line up with your personality will never come as a surprise, even if they take a long time to happen.

In my case, the first problem was to get my personality across to myself. It

took me a bit of time to realise that the only honest way of doing the job was to be myself.

I do not think that this was a problem peculiar to me. Most of us have worked with heads we have admired, and have secretly seen ourselves operating in the same way that they did—striding pompously about, perhaps, glowering at lurking children, or using portentous phrases such as, "Certain boys have been seen in the manner of a man appointed to lead a Kamikaze mission."

Some things about me, though, are so obvious that I had to take account of them straight away. For instance, paper reacts to me just as it does to one of those Bakelite sticks used in first year Physics lessons. I have only to go near a filing tray and the contents fly around the room, adhering to my hair and the seat of my trousers. Clearly, therefore, if my room was not to look like the set of *Deadline Midnight*, I had to move out all filing cabinets and drawers.

Then, momentarily mistaking myself for an academic, I had bookshelves placed along one wall in place of the timetable board which had been there, visualising them filled with hard books with no pictures. It is interesting, today, to see that they do contain some such books, but that they also carry such things as lost PE shorts and a squeaky rubber pig, with which I occasionally tease my secretary to distraction.

What precludes me now, though, is not the day-to-day detail which I originally feared, but the need to keep

some sense of direction in what I and my colleagues are trying to do. "You must have a philosophical touchstone", one influential visitor said. A basic enough point to make, and along with it was the implication that my own philosophical touchstones may not always be very visible.

One reason for this is that over the years I have grown weary of the bickering about educational attitudes which continuously besets our profession. I rebel, for example, at a straight split between "traditional" and "progressive" because I believe you can be traditional on some issues and progressive on others.

My own philosophy—very tangible to me—lies deeper than that, and has more to do with the nature of humanity than with the merits of rival systems. The fact that I find this difficult to express does not help my case one little bit, and what tends to come across is a kind of dilettante pragmatism—"If it works, do it!"

The individual day-to-day problems did arrive of course. There is a standard interview question which goes something like: "You arrive at school to find the toilets flooded, a fight between two mothers in the cloakroom, a boy with a bleeding head outside your door, three teachers away with flu, the cook in tears and a demented dog chasing little girls round the playground. Indicate how you might handle matters."

I assure you I could now cope with it all very easily, while at the same time writing a hymn on a transparency ready

for assembly. I am an acknowledged expert on what to do when the heating irretrievably breaks down 10 minutes before school on the coldest day of the year. That was the day when, after all the children had been seen safely home and we were warning our hands on coffee mugs, we had a phone call asking for much ice cream we wanted for lunch the next day.

Always, though, whatever the midwinters, there is the ever-present compensation of belonging to and leading a community of smashing people. The adren, especially, bring endless warmth and delight. After a manicured session on the telephone, for example, or an office, I can go down the corridor and be met with genuine welcoming greetings.

Not many other professionals can do that. A doctor, for example, or a teacher, is not often greeted with pleasure or opposed to nervous apprehension (though they do have compensations, such as Jaguar and lift with swimming pool). The most striking thing is that all the adults in the school community really do see the children as sacred trust, cliché though that phrase may be. My admiration for them is heightened and given a spiky kind of bitterness by the thought of what spending cuts might do to them. Will I still want to write a joky, sentimental sort of piece 18 months from now?

Gerald Haigh is head of Henry Bellon Middle School, Bedworth, Warwickshire.

Are you still stuck on orange?

I began to feel that pupils were approaching non-workward subjects with the same uncreative frame of mind. "In orange" work often debased their hobby into truncated tears from books too difficult for the children to read.

In all the children made a stained glass window from cellophane, although they did at least paint their own pictures. The work appeared to have a damaging effect in areas where children might more readily be imaginative and creative. This argument can be supported if one

compromises the backcloth environment in which the children were working.

All the six subjects mentioned here were going on at the same time. While a child traced a maths card is likely to be distracted by a child doing art, the child doing art is not working in a creative atmosphere. The administrative gurus imposed upon the teacher almost guaranteed that there would be no flexibility in the system.

The children rarely came up with ideas of their own, something symptomatic of living. The work appeared to have a damaging effect in areas where children might more readily be imaginative and creative. This argument can be supported if one

able and less able children seldom chose to sit together. Bright children hid their work from others, the less able children copied wrong answers from each other.

These difficulties existed although the teacher coped impressively and made conscientious efforts to chart each child's progress. The brightest pupils were to be found working below their potential: one particular boy was bored to distraction.

The assessment skill of the teacher is the central axis upon which the work can survive, and the teacher is perpetually faced with the dilemma of the bright child who needs more, and the precocious child who demands too much.

Furthermore, under a workward regime, the teacher never gets the opportunity and satisfaction of demonstrating his or her teaching ability.

Workcards are a useful strategy in coping with mixed ability. The danger is that they smother motivation, lack flexibility and creative imagination, and enormous demands upon the teacher. Above all, there is a stigma attached to the less able child. "Are you still stuck on orange?"

I heard such exclamations all too often. In this workcard jungle, even a "chuck and talk" would make a welcome change. The writer is a student on a PGCE course at a northern university.

17 Review

Music hath charms

—especially as packaged by the new Concise Oxford History of Music. Arthur Hutchings reports

The Concise Oxford History of Music. By Gerald Abraham. Oxford University Press £15.00.

Intimidated by "concise", the reviewer shuts his eyes and sends his thumb into the pages. If nothing is revealed to set the critical puppets dallying, the human forest goes in. Today page 798 was exposed by the first dive. The main letterpress deals with BELATED WAGNERISM. Try again? No: two tantalizing music quotations, respectively from Satie and Rebikov, lie within a footnote which begins: "He could not have known Mahler's Seventh Symphony", and ends: "It is characteristic of both (Satie and Rebikov) that neither could do more than simply sidestep it unmodified."

The reviewer is Schenker; the "it" is quartal harmony; the author is betrayed as effectively as if a magic thumb had rivalled Aladdin's Lamp. The thumb's careless owner had failed to notice that Gerald Abraham was not again an editor but again the writer of a fascinating book.

Fascinating because of its erudition? Possibly so to those who read little musicography, have met

paraded scholarship but rarely its service (as in the quotations just mentioned) to enlighten what others convey heavily; possibly also to the few who read musicography and slaver to test its author's cogency of recent researches into their pet periods; yet most of us seek reference and text books for special needs, not fascination. At one time those needs were met by German-speaking or German-American scholars, whose works might still serve us with a little updating; but this C.O.H.M.'s bright prospect as a reference or text book did not suggest either design.

Plain "book" more accurately welcomes what we go on turning, page after page, for enjoyment as well as information.

Abraham, of all English musicologists, could best achieve the opposite duty imposed by this title. He does much more, for he was ever the music lover, with a keen eye for the music lover's eye.

His first outstanding radio teacher of music, Walferd Davies, demonstrated "form" from the Viennese classics while G. A. was revealing the stories of the Russian composers, behind the wall of their literary as well as their musical language. In a series of articles

correcting repeated misconceptions of Sibelius's symphonic forms, in *A Hundred Years of Music* (1938), and still going strong!), in editorial comments on *The History of Music in Sound*, and in almost anything he wrote one was aware of a connotation of "form" that transcends academic demonstration of mere designs.

Roger Fry's "Art is significant form" is unfashionable because its sentimentalists exclude communication by expression. Significant of what? For G. A. the form or total conception of an artifact must be judged by its vitality as a concomitant of expression. We need not be scared at the unfamiliarity of many music quotations in the C.O.H.M. (most can be played with little performing skill) because they flatter us. They imply that our intelligence equals his, and that a little attention to styles—the forms and formulae which bestow changes of expressive ideal, may make us share his perception. Consequently not even in the ample spread of the New O.H.M. volumes are we more speedily enabled to grasp the how and therefore the why of medieval music or of any outside c.1680-1920.

In less than a thousand pages Abraham surveys music from Tubal Cain (or before him) to Stravinsky without evidence of compression here, relaxation there. One knows no parallel. Returning to adult reaching after the war we recommended Sachs's *A Short History of World Music* to students less as a textbook than as a much needed extension of perspective. (Vol. 1 of the old O.H.M. was *The Polyphonic Period*—1; Sachs, then almost a septuagenarian, did not reach 1600 until well past his half-way page, as might be expected from so great a scholar of ancient and eastern music.) Despite common sense of evidence, Abraham must have endured enormous time and trouble to thickening and thinning, informing and commenting, and still more to the making of sections and headings not merely chronological, but of enormous time and trouble, recalls a declaration by Mozart about his quartets.

Wisdom may not always think "clever" a compliment, since intelligence is largely natal or pre-natal; praise for hard about is often, as in this notice, acknowledgment of high intelligence not wasted by impatience. Surely hard thinking produced the series of chapter

headings. Music of the Proto-Renaissance, The "New Art" of the 14th Century, The European Synthesis: The Impact of the Renaissance. As Wilde is reputed to have said to Whittier, "If only I had thought of that..." the lectures I gave on music between c.1150 and 1550 might not have been so confusing.

Our minds are such that we neither teach nor learn effectively without neat parcelling; history rarely suggests such clear divisions as the birth of opera (by that name), the rise of a certain composer, and the Preface here expressly states that such phenomena did not decide most sections. We are done with "The Age of..." Josquin, Wagner etc. It would be most wrong to belittle Sachs (his ideal, having marvellously opened the vista of "world" music in his early chapters he is driven to "The age of..." to lists of works by X and Y, and being less interested in music of his own times, an unsatisfactory classification into compositionalisms. Envy has made one search for any parallel shortcomings from Abraham without finding them. His preface says similar things to Sachs's but is more cautious, making no claim: "a wish to stand back and consider the whole continuum..." Not composers except as producers of it, not instruments except as they help to make it. This is no condemnation of N.O.H.M.; "this book is not even based on it." The *New Oxford History* employs the microscope, the *Concise* the telescope. He actually mentions certain difficulties, some faced by chapters called Interludes. They include "interrupting by main account..." when the West became unattentively conscious of non-Western musical systems, and showing something of the relationship between "high art" Western music and certain types of popular

music, anonymous or otherwise. The music quotations (which Sachs omits) might be thought space-taking in anything concise; in fact one regards them as an important clue towards and answer to why this is so readable as a book and not merely useful as a reference or textbook. Abraham's eye is on the ball throughout, the ball being human expression in the most elusive of the arts, called by Vaughan Williams "a rum go".

It is pleasant nowadays to meet such exceptionally good format in a book not rapaciously priced. The *Concise Oxford History of Music* is a book not rapaciously priced. The *Concise Oxford History of Music* is a book not rapaciously priced. The *Concise Oxford History of Music* is a book not rapaciously priced.

which prevent one's framing it



Lord of the Ring

William Mann reviews the latest clutch of Wagner books

Richard Wagner: A Biography. By Derek Watson. Dent £15.00. 460 3166 X.

The Wagner Companion. Editor Peter Burridge and Richard Sutton. Faber £12.50. 371 10471 X. £6.95. 371 14504 X.

I Saw the World End. A study of Wagner's Ring. By Deryck Cooke. Oxford University Press £8.50. 19 315316 S. £3.95. 19 315318 L.

Knowledge of Wagner's life and work has grown vastly since 1946 when Ernest Newman published the fourth and final volume of his monumental biography, still unsurpassed for its masterly deployment of the evidence. Quite recently the *Wagner Companion*, edited by Peter Burridge and Richard Sutton, has been published for the first time (the first volume only, so far, is

English translation). Mary Burrell's great collection of Wagner documents, acquired shortly after his death, was made public in 1950 and now can be examined in the Wagner Archives at Bayreuth. Many hitherto unknown letters, the contents of his libraries in Dresden and Bayreuth, his private papers, sketches, and a host of other material, all have helped to broaden and balance present-day attitudes to this dominant, fascinating and repellent figure in nineteenth-century music and literature.

New biographies, all drawing on the same mass of accessible material, have necessarily to be compared with that by the outstanding senior Wagner scholar, Curt von Westernhagen, whose two volumes appeared in English translation a year ago (Cambridge, Edinburgh, London and New York). Both are still regarded as his views though they are specifically contradicted in *Music of the Future* and elsewhere.

Watson's literary style (unlike Wagner's) makes attractive reading. Sometimes his spelling causes surprise, as in "Engländer", "Carviale", for Carvalho. As one stage he seems to have misread *schlecht* for *schlecht*, attributing to Wagner's conducting "mortal" rather than "honourable" passion. In a book by a musician about music, it is curious to read of "furors" which reached a crescendo of chaos "in matters of fact one may question the likelihood" that Wagner's maternal grandfather was Prince Friedrich Ferdinand, Countess of Weimar (the Countess was a lady, not a prince, and his grandfather was Prince Friedrich Ferdinand, Countess of Weimar).

Colin Matthews, and now appears under a title quoting Brincliffe's words in Wagner's original draft for the closing scene of *Götterdämmerung*, but eventually not set to music.

Cooke was concerned to make a wholly objective, non-partisan, interpretation of the Ring's contents, and to analyze its music as comprehensively as possible. He had first to expose the shortcomings of earlier commentators who "concentrate on the text, which is only the conceptual framework, at the expense of the music, which carries Wagner's ultimate meaning" (this is where, in practice, Wagner realized the wrongness of his theories in *Opera and Drama*). Cooke then showed how analysts of the music *per se* had, from the beginning, erred in assigning labels to Wagner's musical themes: further evidence at the end of his conservative level, is supplied in his contribution to *The Wagner Companion*. He passes to a thorough examination of the textual sources for *The Ring*, and Wagner's recourse to them, at first in general, then as applied to each of the cycle's constituent parts—but Cooke lived only to discuss *Rheingold* and *Walküre*. This is wholly literary; the musical analysis was to follow, on the basis of the libretto evolved by Wagner from his consideration of those sources.

The most challenging of all those is Michael Tanner's essay, on "The Total Work of Art", which maddens and muddles in equal quantities, excellent on Parsifal elsewhere he is misled by a King Charles's Head about D. H. Lawrence. Wagner's literary works are discussed, briefly but with real penetration, by Westernhagen. There are also chapters on Wagner as interpreted by other writers (e.g. Nietzsche and Thomas Mann), and on Bayreuth. The essay on Wagner's musical language is by Deryck Cooke, England's most knowledgeable Wagner scholar, who works on a more musical study of *The Ring* than he did, not young, in 1976. Such of it as was complete has been edited by

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I saw the World End is a tantalizing prologue to the major study which we lack. Yet every Wagnerite, especially those familiar with Cooke's recorded lecture on the music, who accompanies the complete edition of *The Ring*, will want to read this fuller exegesis.

Beyond the number game

Alan Little on education in a multi-racial society

West African Families in Britain. A Meeting of Two Cultures. Edited by June Ellis. Routledge and Kegan Paul £5.95, 7100 8554 6.

The West Indian Language Issue in British Schools. By V. K. Edwards. Routledge and Kegan Paul £6.95, 7100 0172 X, £3.50, 7100 017 3.

Positive Image: Towards a Multi-racial Curriculum. By Robert Jeffcoat. Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative in association with Chancetown, £4.95, 906495 02 4.

Mother Tongue to English: The Young Child in the Multicultural School. By Daphne M. Brown. Cambridge University Press £2.95, £2.29 2229 1.

The public debate about race relations in Britain has been dominated by the twin issues of immigration and discrimination. How many black people are here? How many will there be in the future? These number game questions have been repeatedly asked over the past 30 years. Less

dominant but still significant, has been the documentation of persistent discrimination in employment, housing, and other areas of life. The policy response has been three major pieces of immigrant control legislation and three anti-discrimination laws introduced in the past two decades.

The implications for social policy (housing, education, social work, etc) and professional practice of the changed ethnic composition of the British population have been much less discussed. June Ellis starts her book with these sentences: "Our is a multi-racial society. It is also prejudiced, with a low level of understanding of ethnic minorities". All these

books, in their different ways, seek to heighten awareness of race and understanding of multi-racialism, and indicate ways in which professional practices must be reviewed and modified to meet changing needs.

June Ellis has edited a book on

the relatively small population of black Africans in this country. In many ways they are atypical of other coloured groups. Most are not settlers, but transient students, who bring their families with them: the particular social work need of this group (in addition to support against prejudice and discrimination) is the welfare of children, especially those fostered or cared for by surrogate parents on a long-term basis while parents study or work. These needs are considerable, and more important, inadequately met. They share with other coloured communities the mixture of ignorance and prejudice amongst professionals is by no means peculiar to the West African community and this book attempts to provide social workers with information on the background of the Black African community, its culture and needs in this society.

One of the needs of black children in this country that has been identified and for which services have been developed, is language support. Daphne Brown writes as a primary school head who has been involved with multi-racial classrooms for over 20 years. This is a teacher's book in approach and content, full of what can only be described as tips for teachers from a teacher. Even on issues as politically and professionally vexed as mother-tongue instruction, her approach is direct and practical.

I am not suggesting for one moment that the class teacher, who has so many demands on her time and energy and skills, should be expected to develop a variety of unknown languages as well as cope with the complexities of teaching a group of thirty or more infant children from assorted backgrounds and nationalities. I do consider, however, that it is important for her to be aware of the need for each child to be encouraged in the use of his mother tongue during part of the school day.

The book is full of suggestions for practitioners that stem from a life-

time of professional experience and a liberal conscience.

Another language issue is the need of pupils of West Indian origin: Edwards reviews the way West Indian dialect, or creole, has been perceived by educationalists, and the extent to which it influences the performance of children of West Indian origin in our schools. She rightly emphasizes the responsibility of teachers to inform themselves about the difficulties generated by a marked difference between the language of home and school. The book details the nature of these difficulties and outlines appropriate professional responses. In particular, she is concerned to

show the extent to which West Indian speech is judged negatively and how strategies that try to eradicate or ignore dialect simply do not work.

Jeffcoat's book has a wider canvas. He is trying to assist teachers with the "development of unambiguously multi-racial policies for curriculum and organization". His arguments and documentation come from his own experiences working in multi-racial classrooms in this country and Black Africa. His responses are those of the classroom teacher; for example, children derive "more from the way their teachers behave towards them... than from the ideas, facts

and materials which they are asked to engage with". This book is a plea for a more positive and comprehensive attitude towards the responsibilities of the school in meeting both the special needs of black children and the implications of ethnic diversity for the education offered to all children.

Where these books reinforce each other is in agreeing that the official response to the opportunities and challenges of the multi-racial classroom has been inadequate. As Ellis points out, many people feel that to pay special attention to ethnic minorities is to separate them out in a way from the host community, is undesirable. Edwards notes the prevalence of professional attitudes in education towards the special needs of black children whose attitudes sum up a prevalent professional view:

"I think if they come here they should accept the country and conform to our standards and if they wish to keep their own culture around them, they can do it privately."

I do honestly think we ought to spend time discussing the differences between them. We want them to take it all for granted and when they've been brought up in the infant school side by side, they really don't think about coming from different social backgrounds."

These books question this attitude and strongly argue the educational case for our services coming to terms with the special needs of children whose parents are immigrants. Their common perspective is that it is professionally irresponsible to take no contributory action in this area. Jeffcoat asserts:

"An insular curriculum, pre-coupled with Britain and her values, is unjustifiable in the final quarter of the twentieth century. The curriculum must be both international and in its choice of content and global in its perspective."



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Reclamations. By Peter Abbs. Heinemann Educational £5.95, 435 18024 X.

The themes are familiar: the need to balance the over-emphasis on rationality in our educational tradition by paying more attention to the expressive disciplines of the arts; the desire to reclaim the resources of myth, metaphor, dream and poetry; the interpretation of culture in ways that allow individual response to grow in the soil of tradition. Moved by these aspirations, Abbs develops an 'existential' approach to education, which needs to be lived in intellectual and collaborative communities.

Except where the author becomes skillful in the face of his enemies, the book is well enough written to be read with real enjoyment, and this quality is sufficiently rare in educational writing for one to be tempted to say that it is enough. And it is for the bedside table or the railway carriage.

What the book offers is an individual and personal representation of a recognizable tradition in educational thinking, but there is doubt whether the individuality is robust enough to conquer significantly to the public sphere. I have marked the margins in appreciation, but I don't feel that the book has marked my mind. Perhaps this is a disservice to the author's argument of

There are good points in which the analysis seems defective. The absence of a critical consideration of social and economic issues leaves

unresolved the tension between "the symptoms of decay in our society do not point so much to a failure in the distribution of income and possessions as to a deep and spread failure in cultural values, and it would seem that the only way to deal with this is the increase of profits, and that it is therefore a cultural danger to the control, without any inner moral check or purpose". Here the disquieting falls short of a diagnosis. This shows that the author seems ill-informed. It is surely undeniable that there is an examination of everyday life and work in contemporary popular culture, and there has been a decline in the possible exception of the popular culture of music hall. "Knocked out of the Old Kent Road" and "The Confinement" stand side by side as witness of London life. The book is at its best when it is positive. Then it is a history of the decline of a culture, and educational education. The questions, chosen perhaps for professional notebook, are like milestones. It is at its worst when the author, at other times so clear, so that his own thoughts may shine brighter. He writes: "The individual is a minority taking seriously the ideas of culture, of community and its refinement to support the individual. He has edited for the Truce."

A personal book this, about much of its interest in revealing the author. Well enough written for a good reader to enjoy the conversation. It is not a book to be read for all the occasional insights.

How pleasant to meet him

Lawrence Stenhouse on Peter Abbs

Reclamations. By Peter Abbs. Heinemann Educational £5.95, 435 18024 X.

The themes are familiar: the need to balance the over-emphasis on rationality in our educational tradition by paying more attention to the expressive disciplines of the arts; the desire to reclaim the resources of myth, metaphor, dream and poetry; the interpretation of culture in ways that allow individual response to grow in the soil of tradition. Moved by these aspirations, Abbs develops an 'existential' approach to education, which needs to be lived in intellectual and collaborative communities.

Except where the author becomes skillful in the face of his enemies, the book is well enough written to be read with real enjoyment, and this quality is sufficiently rare in educational writing for one to be tempted to say that it is enough. And it is for the bedside table or the railway carriage.

What the book offers is an individual and personal representation of a recognizable tradition in educational thinking, but there is doubt whether the individuality is robust enough to conquer significantly to the public sphere. I have marked the margins in appreciation, but I don't feel that the book has marked my mind. Perhaps this is a disservice to the author's argument of

There are good points in which the analysis seems defective. The absence of a critical consideration of social and economic issues leaves

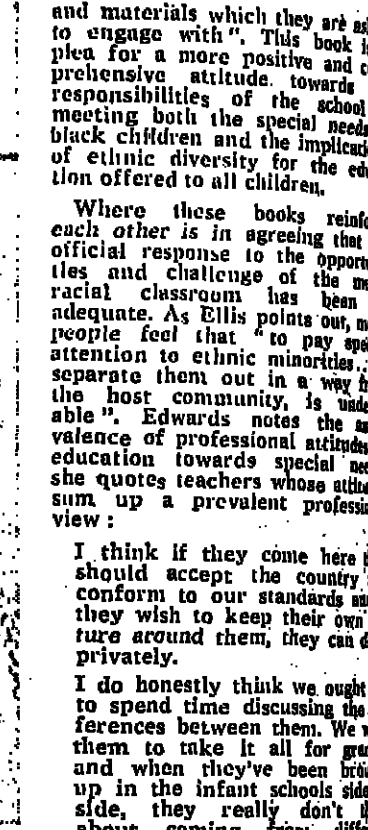
unresolved the tension between "the symptoms of decay in our society do not point so much to a failure in the distribution of income and possessions as to a deep and spread failure in cultural values, and it would seem that the only way to deal with this is the increase of profits, and that it is therefore a cultural danger to the control, without any inner moral check or purpose". Here the disquieting falls short of a diagnosis. This shows that the author seems ill-informed. It is surely undeniable that there is an examination of everyday life and work in contemporary popular culture, and there has been a decline in the possible exception of the popular culture of music hall. "Knocked out of the Old Kent Road" and "The Confinement" stand side by side as witness of London life. The book is at its best when it is positive. Then it is a history of the decline of a culture, and educational education. The questions, chosen perhaps for professional notebook, are like milestones. It is at its worst when the author, at other times so clear, so that his own thoughts may shine brighter. He writes: "The individual is a minority taking seriously the ideas of culture, of community and its refinement to support the individual. He has edited for the Truce."

A personal book this, about much of its interest in revealing the author. Well enough written for a good reader to enjoy the conversation. It is not a book to be read for all the occasional insights.

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time of professional experience and a liberal conscience.

Another language issue is the need of pupils of West Indian origin: Edwards reviews the way West Indian dialect, or creole, has been perceived by educationalists, and the extent to which it influences the performance of children of West Indian origin in our schools. She rightly emphasizes the responsibility of teachers to inform themselves about the difficulties generated by a marked difference between the language of home and school. The book details the nature of these difficulties and outlines appropriate professional responses. In particular, she is concerned to

show the extent to which West Indian speech is judged negatively and how strategies that try to eradicate or ignore dialect simply do not work.

Jeffcoat's book has a wider canvas. He is trying to assist teachers with the "development of unambiguously multi-racial policies for curriculum and organization". His arguments and documentation come from his own experiences working in multi-racial classrooms in this country and Black Africa. His responses are those of the classroom teacher; for example, children derive "more from the way their teachers behave towards them... than from the ideas, facts

and materials which they are asked to engage with". This book is a plea for a more positive and comprehensive attitude towards the responsibilities of the school in meeting both the special needs of black children and the implications of ethnic diversity for the education offered to all children.

Where these books reinforce each other is in agreeing that the official response to the opportunities and challenges of the multi-racial classroom has been inadequate. As Ellis points out, many people feel that to pay special attention to ethnic minorities is to separate them out in a way from the host community, is undesirable. Edwards notes the prevalence of professional attitudes in education towards the special needs of black children whose attitudes sum up a prevalent professional view:

"I think if they come here they should accept the country and conform to our standards and if they wish to keep their own culture around them, they can do it privately."

I do honestly think we ought to spend time discussing the differences between them. We want them to take it all for granted and when they've been brought up in the infant school side by side, they really don't think about coming from different social backgrounds."

These books question this attitude and strongly argue the educational case for our services coming to terms with the special needs of children whose parents are immigrants. Their common perspective is that it is professionally irresponsible to take no contributory action in this area. Jeffcoat asserts:

"An insular curriculum, pre-coupled with Britain and her values, is unjustifiable in the final quarter of the twentieth century. The curriculum must be both international and in its choice of content and global in its perspective."

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Children's literature

Out of the ordinary

Audrey Laski on paperbacks

Outsiders, and their attempts to get into a group or to come to terms with their inability to do so, form a major theme of this batch of books, at least in the middle and upper ranges; it is explored, both in everyday and fantastic settings.

One example is set in the past: Esther Forbes' Johnny Tremaine (Puffin 70p) concerns a boy set apart first by the arrogance of his silver-tongued father, afterwards by his ruined hand, in the fermenting Boston of the Tea Party and shows how he finds his role in the historical struggle: a first-rate historical novel. I feel less enthusiasm for Jane Gardam's Bilgewater (Peacock 95p): the young adults it is meant for would do better reading Murdoch and water about the emotional entanglements of a girl brought up on the fringe of a boys' school. Even further out on the edge of things is She the Adventurer by Dorothy Croyder (Puffin 65p), trying to do a novel which being an untested minor on an Atlantic crossing by liner; the breezy quality of this tale is perfectly caught by Quentin Blake's cover picture.

This is American jokiness; the English variety is expressed in the new novel, Outcast Jack (Puffin 75p). Jack is an outsider because everyone else in his family is brilliant; their dashing eccentricities and his desperate attempts to cultivate one of his own are, initially hilarious, but begin, after a while, to be wearing, at least to an adult reader.

I never stopped chuckling, though, at Tim's attempts to get into Louie's Lot, by E. W. Hildick (Knight 75p), the milkround elite; small wonder that this highly educative, hilarious book has become a children's classic in 14 years. Deeply amusing also, is Life with Lisa, by Sybil Bury (Puffin 70p), which claims to be the diary of a girl settling into a secondary modern school in the fifteen minutes after the bell.

The new school, especially if one is joining it late, is an almost inevitable place to be an outsider, and two good books with boys as central characters use this situation: in All My Men (Puffin 75p), Bernard Ashley, as usual, confronts his primary school hero with a genuine moral problem, while Fish, the eponymous hero of Allison Morgan's story (Puffin 65p), has to cope with the practical issue of protecting his dog Floss from shooting as a sheep-worrier.

as well as establishing friendship. Of course, there is also the outsider by race, Jan Needie's My Mate Shoffa (Fontana Lions 70p) confronts with magnificent directness the dilemma of an ordinary indigenous boy who finds himself reluctantly becoming friendly with a Pakistani, as well as casting a cold eye on the well-meaning insensitivities of school workers.

In Nina Bowden's The Secret Passage (Puffin 65p) the outsider is a girl with a gift for creative untruths which entangle a friendly family of children next door in a wild adventure. It is oddly, accidentally reminiscent of E. Nesbit's little-known but newly reissued The Enchanted Castle (Puffin 85p); here, in Nesbit's characteristic blending of the everyday and the fantastic, Mabel's pretend magic is overtaken by the real thing, and amazing happenings follow, as they do regularly in the alternative universe imagined by Nesbit's splendid successor, Diana Wynne Jones, in Charmed Life (Puffin 80p); the involved, inventive plots of both quite defy summary.

For fantasy on an even larger scale, there are two important publications: The Earthsea Trilogy (Penguin £1.75) brings together Ursula Le Guin's three highly praised tales about Gerd the wizard and his adventures, and The Book of Merlyn, the last of a book by T. H. White's massive work on King Arthur, has arrived in paperback from Fontana (95p); a sad, sustained but necessary conclusion. So is good that Mistress Moshem's Repose has also been reissued (Puffin 75p) to remind us that White could defend freedom as passionately but with less acrimony on his best days.

One special kind of fantastic outsider is the ghost: in A Blue Velvet Dress, by Catherine Sefton (Puffin 65p) is a charming, funny story about an obsessive bookworm stranded on holiday in a bookless house, and helped by a friendly renaissance; it is good that this story, edited by André Norton, is a fairly spine-chilling collection of classic tales about child-ghosts which should perhaps only be given to those with an iron nerve and a taste for long words (Puffin 75p).

Other good collections of short stories are, at one end of the age-range, The Real Thing, edited by Peggy Woodford (Peacock 80p), a lively set of love stories, and, at the other, Listen With Mother Stories, edited by Dorothy Edwards

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22 Resources



Programmed fun and silicon games

ROGER STEPHENS looks at the effects of the microchip on traditional toys, festivals and the television screen

The British toy industry is expecting to sell £40m worth of silicon chip toys by Christmas, representing eight to 10 per cent of the annual total retail turnover. This is regarded as a dramatically large share for a range of products that have been on the market scarcely a year.

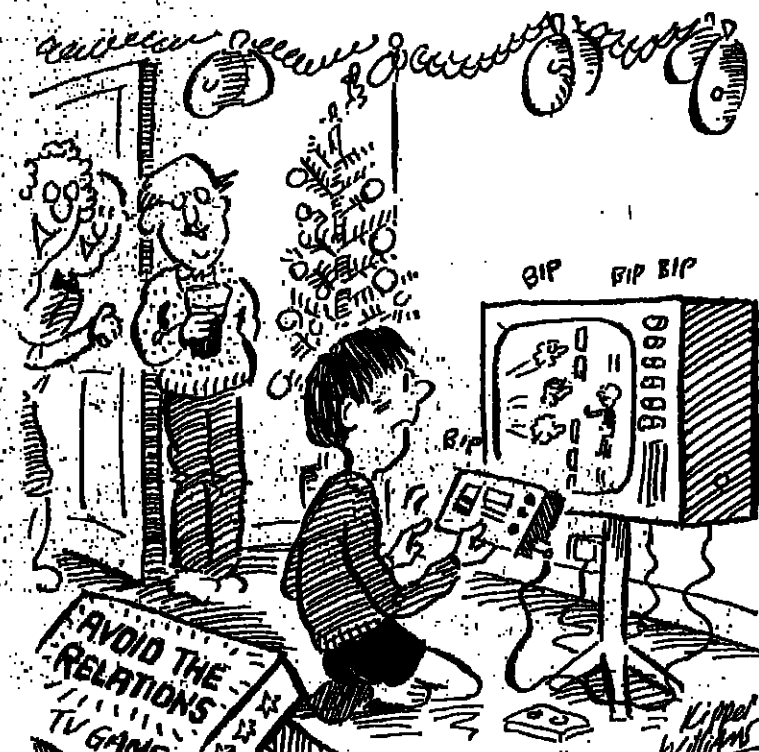
Paradoxically, the most eye-catching toys turn out to be the least interesting. They are often little more than pocket calculators in drag, with a programmed secret number which has to be drawn out by much guesswork and button-pressing, or they present various combinations of lights and sounds to be reproduced in the correct order by the players.

The games which offer the more intricate challenges tend to be those with the more inscrutable exteriors. The cartridges for the video games are of uniform shape, but their contents can be as varied as that of a gramophone record.

By and large the "new" games bear the same relationship to the old that the early cinema did to the theatre. The magic ingredient—the silicon chip—flavours the cake to a greater or lesser extent.

Sometimes it serves to rejuvenate traditional toys like the train set by making it possible to perform more complex operations than before. At other times special chips have been added to the pocket calculator, for example, to perform more complex operations than before.

Such games are set to invade the home with the help of that electronic mule by every fireside, the television set. This can double as a visual display unit for hundreds of different games of "strategy, skill and learning". These are on pre-programmed cartridges which can be slotted into a small computer and played back on the screen like a videotape that has been designed



to interact with the viewer.

Video games point the way to a new relationship between man and his electronic environment. There are signs of a gradual breakaway from the passivity induced by three generations of television viewing. (The British Broadcasting Corporation spent 250 years a week watching Coronation Street.) It is becoming possible, via video cassette recorders, electronic games and Teletext, to have some say about what appears on the screen and when.

As always there is no guarantee that people will necessarily take the next logical step and begin devising their own games, making their own programmes and composing text for electronic publication. Any more than the wind-up gramophone triggered a wave of home-produced records. Nevertheless the door is ajar, and the technology is becoming cheaper and more accessible.

Meanwhile, back in consumer land something else—but at a price which puts many of the hard-core chip toys beyond the reach of the individual child and often beyond the non-essential expenditure of the average family.

It is advisable to think carefully before buying. This is especially

important in a new area which is largely unfamiliar to the average purchaser. Unlike the audio cassette, which has been standardized throughout the world, the makers of video games have not yet agreed on technical uniformity. This means that some games are sold exclusively to a particular computer and cannot be interchanged.

These kinds of anomaly presumably intended to ensure that if you want software produced by a certain company you must buy that company's hardware to play it on, thus backing up manufacturers by reducing overall sales. Bearing this in mind, it would be a good idea to check whether the system that both catches the eye and suits the wallet is produced by a company that has made some attempt at compatibility. Are their games playable on at least one other system?

Three companies who have together taken this one small step are Acetronic, Radofin and Prinztronic, who have based their games on the Signetics microprocessor. Acetronic have 14 games on the market including Circus, Prizefight, the usual tank and aircraft battles, and what is termed a Hobby Computer Model which is designed to enable players to create and develop

their own games. One of the forthcoming games appears to be called Soccer and Ohello (the Bobby Moore of Venice?).

Acetronic's most overtly educational title, Basic Maths, provides practice in addition and subtraction but does nothing that could not be done with paper and pencil almost as quickly and at far less cost.

Broadly speaking, with prices ranging from about £15 to nearly £300, higher costs tend to reflect potentially greater flexibility. At first it might seem that Merlin, from Palitoy, with six games (Three-In-A-Row, Magic Machine, Bobo, Blackjack, 13 Magic Square and Secret Number) and selling for £20, would be a better bargain than the Acetronic system which sells for around eight times as much and currently offers 14 cartridges. The disadvantage is that Merlin and the other toys in the same price range have their games built in, and this limits their interest once the novelty has worn off.

In spite of these strictures, Merlin is one of three electronic games among the 10 toys nominated for the 1979 toy of the year by the National Association of Toy Retailers. The others are the previously mentioned Electronic Mastermind and Simon, the present best seller in the conditioned response stakes. The brochure asks "Who can beat Simon and repeat correctly all his signals in an ever increasing sequence of lights and sounds?"

This game can be played at four levels of skill up to a near-impossible 31 light sequence. Pavlov's dogs never did it so good. In this case the reward, according to the photograph, is not food but that precious intangible, family togetherness. A very similar game for about the same price is Touch Me, from Atari, which has one less skill level but is not as bulky as Simon.

A rather more creative toy for those interested in more than simply sharpening their reaction times is Compute-a-Tune from Waddingtons, which memorizes tunes composed on its keyboard and plays them back at the correct speed and tempo, with added chord and echo effects if needed. At £21 this seems to combine flexibility with low price in a way that makes it one of the stronger contenders to survive beyond Boxing Day.

Having said earlier that the games mean decreased words over a game new words, the price range, the Yodel Challenger, from Computer Ltd, mentioned above, with a for about £250. There are some computerized chess boards on the market, but as far as I know of them can talk; and this scale in its favour.

The flexibility that goes with high price stems mainly from the complexity of the game, the electronic trappings add a fascination. The Challenger can teach up to 40 standard and even play against a human "usually" winning a hint of human fallibility (a comforting thought). Despite this, which puts it out of the range of a child's interest, even whole families may find it great themselves to play it, as an example of the development that are the horizon, as steadily before prices.

On the evidence of the toys only on the market it seems probable that the trend towards one machine capable of more than one game will continue and that in the near future we will be seeing machines capable of playing any kind of game from pool and croquet to three-dimensional chess, as now a record player can play any kind of music.

Acetronic MEU 1000, Acetronic Consumer Electronics Ltd, 100, Pulton Road, Wembley, Middlesex, W15 0. Cartridges £15 each. Merlin, Palitoy, Covello, Ltd, 100, Pulton Road, Wembley, Middlesex, W15 0. Cartridges £15 each. Merlin, Palitoy, Covello, Ltd, 100, Pulton Road, Wembley, Middlesex, W15 0. Cartridges £15 each.

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Extra
Australia and New Zealand

Looking to an uncertain future: at school in Sydney and Alice Springs.

Western problems poured into a different mould

by John Kirkaldy

Too many people still think of Australia as a very English place in a sub-tropical setting with perhaps a few traces of American. Whatever the truth, there might once have been, in this stereotypical picture, it is now far from reality. Australian education does share certain difficulties with the Western world: its school leavers face poor employment prospects, and there is inflation and an over-supply of teachers. But local circumstances often make (or force) educators here into different moulds.

The crucial relationship to understand in Australian education is the tension between the Federal and state governments. The secondary sector is, unlike tertiary education, primarily a state responsibility with the Federal Government supplying money in the form of grants, co-ordinating the national effort and trying to take an overview. As best this makes for an efficient and responsive system which serves well for local needs (at least as provided by a sluggish and bureaucratic apparatus, which can stifle progress).

A Federal Minister for Education will almost certainly find himself confronted with some state government of differing political views. At present the ruling Liberal-National Country Party Coalition is faced with Labour governments in New South Wales and Queensland.

No local politician is entirely immune from the temptation to use the drum of rights if it is convenient to drop passing the buck to Canberra in times of unemployment.

The Northern Territory became an independent state in July 1978 and took over responsibility for its education system at the beginning of this year. The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has taken responsibility.

Each state has its own school system, complete with individual school grades, exams, teacher salary scales and local regulations. Each

state capital has its own minister of education, education department and local pressure groups, all duplicating a similar structure at the federal level. An English migrant will sometimes find his educational qualifications more easily accepted in parts of Australia than, for example, a Western Australian in Tasmania.

In June the Government announced a cut of A\$40m in the education budget. Recurrent grants for universities and colleges were frozen, and hospital funds were cut by 15.6 per cent. Technical and further education allowances to the states went up by 10.7 per cent, but these were a 5.7 per cent cut in schools allocation, mainly in capital funding which was cut by 29.6 per cent.

The Federal Government also provides money for educationally-related concerns, such as migrants and aborigines.

States have the right to raise taxation in certain areas and have considerable say in the allocation of funds to particular priorities within their own education system. Federal grants are often calculated on complicated formulas. Grants to non-governmental schools, for instance, are based on a per-pupil system related to the needs and number of pupils.

To analyse precisely where authority lies in such a system is difficult as the relationship continually changes. A great deal depends on the governments in power and their political strength. The Federal Government, as the provider of the money and the regulator of the economy, has considerable muscle, but individual states have great potential for upsetting plans, particularly if they can act in conjunction with others.

Regulating, coordinating and, hopefully, harmonizing these elements are a multiplicity of institutions and bodies. Most important of these is the Schools Commission, headed by Dr Ken McKinnon, which was founded in 1973 by the then Labour Government, to see that targets and identify needs within the Australian secondary system.

The recommendations it makes to the Federal Government before the budgets are given considerable publicity, and afterwards the commission is highly influential in the precise allocation of funds. It also does less publicized work in research, educational projects and the provision of statistics.

It is no secret that certain members of the present government, particularly some of its backbenchers, are hostile to, or wary of, the commission. Some see it as a legacy of the Labour government, others as a force for centralization, and many dislike what they see as its plodding background.

The commission, unlike the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), has also on occasions stuck its political neck out and this has not always made it popular.

At least one state leader, Sir Charles Court, the Conservative premier of Western Australia, has called for its abolition. This would certainly be opposed by the Labour states.

The present government of Malcolm Fraser, which came to power in controversial circumstances in November 1975, is pledged to a "new federalism" policy with more devolution of power to the states.

Little change so far has emerged so far, however. In recent federal-state premiers meetings, the Liberal-National Country Party states (Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia) have urged that more power in education should move to state governments. These views have also been aired at meetings of the Australian Education Council, which comprises federal and state ministers of education. A review is being undertaken but nothing concrete has yet been decided.

A discussion document produced by the Schools Commission listed a number of changes that could take place in the present tripartite system of federal, state and private funding. It found "that the present financial arrangements... of the present Federal Government's direct finan-

cial commitment gives the impression of being increasingly directed away from government schools.

Secondly, in spite of this, increased federal financial commitment to them, little progress is being made in bringing disadvantaged non-government schools closer to government school standards. Thirdly, the introduction and development of special programmes, which continue to be mainly a federal responsibility, will be financed for the most part by reductions in Commonwealth spending unless there is a reversal in this trend.

The discussion paper also investigated the possible introduction of education vouchers. It estimated that such a system "could well revolutionize the structure of education systems and certainly hold the

promise of a changed relationship between users and schools". It calculated that such a change would mean "massive increases in government funding to private schools. Such a change, if only on an experimental scale, has obvious attractions to a government pledged to give more choice in schooling to parents."

Understandings of the country's education system can be gained unless it is realized that Australia is not only a country but also a continent. From Perth to Sydney is about the same distance as from London to Moscow. The whole of the British Isles could fit many times into most individual states.

Above three-quarters of the population live in the coastal strip. Continued on page 28

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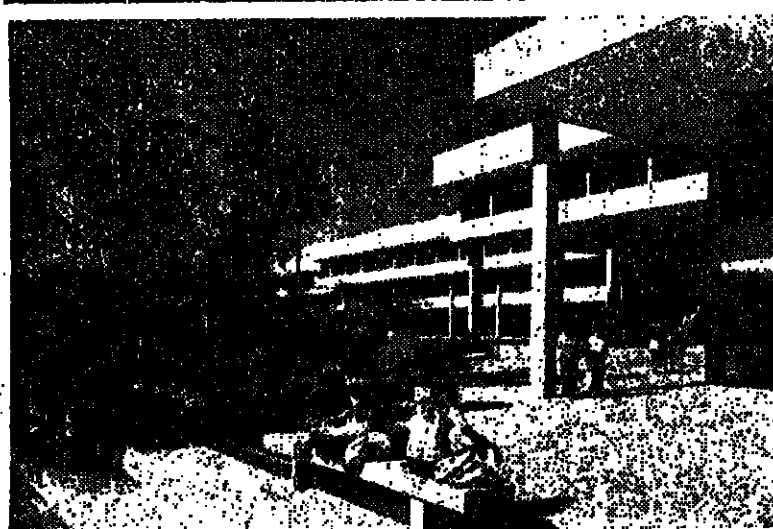
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Griffith University, near Brisbane.

Universities begin to tighten belts

by Ngalo Crequer

After 20 years of heady expansion the brakes have been applied to Australian higher education. The key words now are consolidation, rationalisation and, more ominously, cut-back.

The only sector which will be allowed to show any substantial growth will be technical and further education which became a poor relation in the favouritism accorded to universities and colleges in the past two decades.

According to the Government, admissions to universities and colleges are beginning to subside and enrolments to schools to decline. Participation in higher education is now also starting to level off and rising unemployment has cooled the aspirations of prospective graduates.

Yet the question of future demand for higher education is a notoriously difficult one to answer. One recent study held that total enrolments in universities and colleges expressed as a percentage of the population aged 17-22 years were projected to range from 19.4 to 29.1 per cent in 2001.

One recommendation currently being considered by the Federal Government is that the provision of educational services should be firmly linked with the growth of the economy.

The Williams report, the result of a committee of inquiry into education and training, which reported in March this year, suggested that the cost of education could fall to about 1.6 per cent of the gross domestic product by the year 2001, compared with a 1977 figure of 1.84 per cent.

The Williams Committee was set up to make recommendations about the whole range of educational provision. Although it is soft on cost-cutting, its general philosophy is that belts must be tightened, standards eradicated, standards made tougher, discipline removed, tenure made more difficult and technical courses be more sensitive to employment needs.

Universities should prepare schemes for early retirement, re-training and secondment of staff to provide flexibility and innovation, if these are not successful, they should prepare schemes for redundancy.

The universities are generally happy with Williams. Since 1952 their number increased from nine to 19, the last five being established in the period 1965-75.

They have long since accepted that there will be no more new universities but they were also pleased that Williams came out against a suggestion that universities should be split into two groups.

They are also happy that funding will be a Commonwealth responsibility and that the system of making universities self-financing through tertiary education, Commission grants, Williams called for the restoration of full tertiary funding.

College of Advanced Education was established in 1966. It was the first of a new type of institution, a high community status to provide a greater diversity of courses. At first there were only 20 institutions, but now numbers have increased.

largely because of the latter-day inclusion of teacher colleges in the sector.

The Williams report pointed out that the average number of students per college is less than 2,000. Within the sector there is great variety in the size and quality, a general feeling of lack of identity.

Williams went some way to delineating the role of CAEs and the universities, restoring a sense of identity for the former. One of the problems had been the incidence of academic drift, the tendency to aspire towards the objectives of universities, to upgrade courses and entry requirements and to seek greater freedom of control.

Specifically Williams came out against the hiving off from the college sector of a group of eight large institutions, mainly Institutes of Technology. The group had argued that they should form a special tier distinct from both the university and college sector. Their aspirations remain though their hopes have been dashed.

The basic principles of advanced education were confirmed. The colleges should be vocationally oriented, providing multi-level courses, with flexible entry requirements, teaching methods and course design, and applied in emphasis, directed towards undergraduate rather than postgraduate teaching.

A further recommendation was that fund-allocating decisions for CAEs should be allocated to the states but at least one large college in each state should continue to be funded by the Commonwealth Government.

The technical and further education (TAFE) sector in Australia is by far the most accessible, both in terms of geography and entrance requirements. There are more than double the number of TAFE students than the number of university and college students put together.

It is this sector which the Government is committed to foster and expand. The Williams report suggested a national centre for research and development to analyse the skills needed for particular occupations and the courses needed.

In June the Government announced a cut of A\$40m in its education budget. It effectively froze recurrent grants for universities and colleges but cut capital funds by 15.5 per cent. The TAFE sector received a small increase in income and school spending (except private schools which got a rise) was cut by 11 per cent.

In its 1979-81 triennial report, the Tertiary Education Commission said that recurrent grants since 1975 had not kept pace with student numbers. The Commission said that the reduction in financing would erode quality, inhibit innovation and the capacity to adapt to the community and demand research.

At the same time there are other laws for the future to be taught. In the universities and colleges there is a growing demand for staff in education, in which eventually the High Court may have to interpose. Such demands could change the whole character of the relationship between employers and employees. At the bottom of staff colleges are fears about pay, staff leave and short-term appointments.

Too cold out there alone?

Over recent years schools have been given much more control over their curriculum. Internal assessment has taken the place of external examinations. By Andy Nieuwenhof

The past decade has seen a major shift from centralized control towards greater freedom for schools to make their own decisions. This has resulted in schools having more say in curriculum content and in most cases abandoning external examinations in favour of internal assessment by teachers.

This change has happened fairly fast and many teachers are now calling for a slowing down. Strong moves are being made in some quarters to bring back external examinations. Teachers want to get back to basics and the security of centrally imposed guidelines in many cases.

This was evident in a report produced recently by a sub-committee of the Primary Principals Association of South Australia. It noted that many schools found these self totally responsible for the educational programme operating within their four walls, but were shouldering this responsibility under great difficulty. The reasons for this were:

- Lack of appropriate curriculum support.
- Isolation from professional guidance or advice.
- The sheer magnitude of the task of developing school-based curriculum.

The drive for greater school independence came initially from teacher associations and the department of education in the various states. It has been spurred on in recent years by the Federal Government, set up under the Whitlam Labour administration, the Schools Commission and the Curriculum Development Centre. Both bodies have been a force in encouraging fresh approaches in curriculum.

The responsibility for the curriculum in each Australian state rests with the state departments of education. In Victoria, for example, the curriculum and research branch of the department has a staff of more than 200.

In general, secondary schools are free to develop their own curricula and run their own programmes with the emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Schools are encouraged to adapt to the conditions in particular regions of the state. Up to year 10—the minimum school leaving year—there are no major

perhaps be the case in some countries.

Since 1971 the autonomy of schools has increased, the role of the inspectorate in many states has become less important and advisory, and external examinations at 16 have more or less disappeared.

Professor Walton notes that public debate about education is increasing in intensity. In South Wales state-wide examinations were being held at 16 plus is being canvassed. But, he writes: "Back to the future of a curriculum is the centre, at least as far as the concern about the curriculum and education systems and the core can be regarded as a yearning for a former centralized system."

Despite the general move away from external exams, pressure is being applied from several quarters to have them re-introduced. In particular, evidence in New South Wales a Cabinet decision awaited on the future of the certificate assessment system.

Any change would affect 75,000 students in year 12 certificate has been based on a teacher assessment since 1971, moderating exams in English and mathematics. Since its introduction many employers have complained that it does not provide a guide to pupils' abilities and some have held their own exams for applicants.

Criticism has also come from parents and pupils who among things say the school certificate does not adequately measure achievement. The New South Wales Teachers' Federation is opposing changing the assessment system saying that if external exams are re-introduced New South Wales would be the only state in Australia to have them.

An official at the state department of education said however that many individual teachers would be re-introduced. A survey of teachers conducted by the department has shown that 85 per cent are in favour of external exams.

The department has received over 1,000 submissions on the subject and these have been overwhelmingly in favour of a return to some sort of external exam system.

Although there has always been variation work and similar schemes, the provision of education for tribal Aborigines did not seriously develop until 1950 when the Commonwealth Government made it its own responsibility.

The basis for all Aboriginal education is still the specially commissioned White-Gallagher report of 1964 which stressed the need for education to be relevant to the needs of all children and recognized the need for Aborigines to achieve the integration of their ways and beliefs into the prevailing system.

Aboriginal schools in the Northern Territory, with which this article is primarily concerned, come under the NT Department of Education. Pre-school care is integrated into the primary school system, a unique situation in Australia. With few exceptions any four-year-old child would be able to take up a place.

The principle of compulsory education is applied to children who are five years of age, but the primary level providing they have sufficient maturity. If they do not, parents are advised to keep them in pre-school for another year.

In Aboriginal communities children can attend pre-school at the age of three, if they are specially referred. This is primarily designed to help those with special problems, like sight or hearing defects.

Watts and Gallagher identified two groups of Aboriginal children: the educationally advanced and those still very close to tribal beliefs and patterns of living.

The school system still keeps to this rough and ready classification. In the latter group are those in a general stream until they are 13, and then transfer to a pre-employment school or district post-employment school for three years. They are taught basic subjects with a vocational emphasis.

The smaller group of brighter children enter an upper stream at about eight and some (300 in 1975) at a master of labour to try to

It has been in the territory that the Williams committee has been most criticized. The approach—both the Williams approach and the CAEs with caution—has no major innovations.

At the centre of the problem is the employment of young people. The Williams Committee urges better training techniques for TAFE schools, the introduction of "feeder" residential centres for students, colleges, courses for students and students in their effective use, and adequate support staff and a greater range and flexibility in TAFE courses.

The great hope of school leavers and their parents in the 1960s was a tertiary degree, no longer a certain passport to employment and high income. In 1977 9.5 per cent of all university graduates were still without a job five months after graduating.

Aborigines make up only one per cent of the Australian population, but the difficulties of developing effective educational programmes are enormous. Ngalo Crequer reports

Bilingual bridge between two worlds

The Aborigines in Australia are a dispossessed people. They are scattered in confused groups throughout the country, some striving to retain their traditional tribal identity, others migrating to the towns and becoming assimilated into Western society.

Attitudes towards them vary from the few but outspoken racial bigots who declare the British got it right in Tasmania (they exterminated the race in the last century), to those who suffer a great burden of guilt at the ill-treatment of the Aborigines, who at different times have been denied their lands, rights and citizenship.

For those whites who now attempt to make amends there is the problem of how best to do it; assimilation or separation. The first option, taken up in earnest in the 1950s and 1960s, is now largely discredited and abandoned as official Government policy. It came to be seen as an assault on the unique culture of the Aborigine, a move to absorb and thereby "lose" them into the white races.

The second option is the simple racism. The problem is how to maintain the self-identity of the Aborigines and to provide for their special needs while at the same time giving them the opportunity and the skills to survive and compete in white Australian society.

There are about 116,000 Aborigines in Australia, including wholly and part Aborigines. At the time of the first European settlement in 1788 there were approximately 300,000. The population is steadily increasing and it is estimated that the original number will be reached again by the end of this century.

They currently make up about one per cent of the Australian population, and are very spread out, with few in the larger cities. More than 85 per cent are rural-based.

Many live in small townships of anything from 1,000 to 5,000 people but there has been a discernible trend away from these sites and back to traditional lands of semi-tribal communities in the Northern Territory more than a quarter of the total population of 100,000 is Aborigine.

Although there has always been variation work and similar schemes, the provision of education for tribal Aborigines did not seriously develop until 1950 when the Commonwealth Government made it its own responsibility.

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will go on to traditional residential colleges. These colleges vary in their aims and achievements but they help to prepare Aborigine children for further study or employment or to equip them for leadership roles if they decide to return to their former communities.

In 1973 an advisory group was set up to examine the need for a bilingual education programme in schools in the Northern Territory and to discover how to implement such a scheme. The report of the group remains the basis for work now going on.

The need was to coordinate a series of programmes that would allow Aborigines to be taught in their own language and be able to use their traditional arts, crafts and skills as part of a conventional curriculum.

In general the curriculum is designed so that English is taught at first as a second language, and instruction in general subjects being given in the Aborigine language. As the children begin to attain sufficient command of English, it plays a larger part in the curriculum. By the time a child has reached the post-primary stage, although he is still studying his own language and Aboriginal arts and crafts, all other subjects are taught in English.

Even in mathematics, for example, an Aborigine number system might be limited to talk of one and two, and then the more and the many. Larger, specific numbers would not exist.

In 1973 four schools were selected for the introduction of bilingual programmes. By 1978 21 schools had such programmes either operating or planned. There were some interesting problems.

The Australian Department of Aboriginal Affairs found in a survey that there were speakers of 128 Aboriginal languages or dialects in the Northern Territory.

In some cases there were communities with comparatively large numbers speaking different languages. In others, there was a dominant language, with significant numbers of people speaking other languages in very few communities.

Programmes were introduced only after long consultation with the Aborigine community, which had to make the decision as to what language or languages could be used.

Graham McGill, of the NT Department of Education, explained: "There might be up to five or six languages used in any one community. Then there is the question of whether the language is researched and the number of children involved."

"The community has to be aware that it will have a new relationship and responsibility to the school and programme, once it is introduced. The community becomes the source of much of the information that will be the gist of the teaching."

It places a new responsibility on the Aborigine teaching assistants who help the teachers. In the development of the courses, the department draws on Aborigine knowledge into lesson plans and learns about approaches to natural science.

Each Aborigine clan has a range of stories about its past, some explaining and interpreting the present. A man or woman is identified as the "owner" of the story and it is their duty to keep the tale alive. It is a respected position in the community, which has no written language and although the whole community would know a particular story, it is owned by the teller.

The story is developed as a bilingual course. To try to use these stories, but this has raised the problem of copyright. As they are printed, the story teller, the story writer and the illustrator are nominated as the copyright holders.

It can be a sensitive subject. Department staff think that some of those stories have been taken and published overseas. They consider it a matter of honour to try to

protect the Aborigines from this kind of exploitation. Of the 21 schools nominated for the bilingual programme, 15 of the schemes are in operation, two of the programmes are being prepared. At three of the schools the programme has been suspended because of changes in the social and linguistic expectations of the Aborigine community.

For example, a large mining concern has been developed near one school. The school has been influenced by the more prevalent use of English. Better wages have been offered by the mining establishment and the fish processing factory. This has affected the number of Aborigine teacher assistants willing to work at the school.

If a community makes a request for a bilingual programme the department's staff first institute a socio-linguistic survey to look at the composition of the unwritten language.

Research linguists make a phonetic study of the language. Then teacher linguists become familiar with the language as used by the community. They are then able to use up Aborigine teacher assistants and to create literature and curriculum material. Production supervisors must gain sufficient command to be able to give technical instruction to the Aborigines for compiling the literature.

Mr McGill said: "There are many teachers in the field who learn to develop a fairly high level of competence as they go along. We also have immersion programmes. The difficulty of learning in Aborigine language is that it is not transferable."

A young teacher may learn Pitjantjatjara at Docker River, one of the remotest schools in the



In Aborigine clans stories are "owned" by individuals charged with the duty of keeping them alive. Using such tales in bilingual courses to teach children like these can lead to copyright problems.

territory, about two days' hard driving from Alice. If he is then transferred to Yuendumu, he will have to learn a completely different language, Warlpiri.

And it is not only the teachers that move. The Pitjantjatjara people are wanderers. The population of the school can go up or down at any time. A clan group may decide to move either to another Pitjantjatjara settlement or to their homelands, or an out station. Each clan has its own traditional dreaming land or homeland and as more of these areas are now being recognized by the Australian Government, many Aborigines are returning to them.

When groups go to their homeland centres they are expected to seek the department to provide an educational service. But the fact they have made the journey often means they have turned their backs on white society. They are committed to creating a living environment and often education is not high up in their priorities.

At the last count, 43 homeland communities were receiving some kind of educational service. Over 100 homeland centres or out stations had been mapped and recognized by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

One of the problems for both the Aborigines and the teachers is that the values of the two societies are different. Aborigines do not run their lives by clocks, but by the feel of the sun, and turn up for lessons at different times. There is no privacy in Aboriginal society which makes it difficult for the Aborigine child to find sufficient solitude to think about his or her work. And books have a very short life since the Aborigine has no means to store things.

Most teachers will only take a two-year appointment in these schools. There is a high turnover of staff, which consequently affects the attitude and the availability of Aborigine staff.

In fact it is the training of teachers that is proving one of the stumbling blocks to the programme, according to Graham McGill. There is as yet no tertiary institution which offers an undergraduate or master's programme in bilingual education.

Teachers do have the opportunity to take up Aboriginal studies but to be successful in this, they should be able to understand the theoretical underpinnings of bilingualism, or to look at teaching methodology, or to consider the demands of curriculum development for a society without literature.

The department does its own in-service training but teachers are often "raw" and learn by shock methods that is, being put in position and told to survive. The hope is that the spread of bilingual education will produce the demand in tertiary institutions for the right course.

And one question that will have to be resolved is what is the real purpose of bilingual education? Is it for the educationally disadvantaged, or the culturally different?

Graham McGill takes the latter view. "If the education department can be pressed to take their view then eventually we should be talking about a bilingual programme from pre-school to tertiary education. But if the view is that it is a programme for the educationally disadvantaged, then the aim will be for everyone to get into the English programme as soon as possible. I do not know which will win," he said.

Growing, sharing and learning?

by Lindsay Hayes

Nearly two years after it began, the public debate on the Johnson Committee blueprint for health and social education, *Growing, Sharing, Learning*, ended this year with a pile of submissions six feet high.

Not since 1974 when the Ross Committee recommended sex education in primary schools has an education department report created such controversy.

A best seller in Government printing terms, the report has sold more than 31,000 copies in comparison, for example, to the Prime Minister's budget last year which managed only 12,400 sales.

Now the assorted education groups and individuals who registered their views are waiting to see what recommendations will be acted upon and when.

Although some of the recommendations, such as an increase in the school guidance network, demand hefty financial commitments, other sections, like extra community involvement, could be implemented immediately without funds.

The committee was headed by the former principal of Auckland's Aitken College, Mr Garfield Johnson. It included the Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Police, Mr Graeme Dallas, a public relations officer for a meat company, several doctors, a community worker, a housewife, assorted teachers and a parish priest.

In March, 1976, the committee opened its brief to identify the conditions under which healthy growth and development may be fostered in schools and to make recommendations on the studies and activities that should constitute school programmes, organization and relationships.

The brief, prompted by growing doubts about the adequacy of existing health and social education, was approved by the then

Minister of Education Mr Phil Amos and widened slightly by his successor Mr Les Gandar, to encompass community-wide social concerns.

When the report was published, the education department dispatched complimentary copies to school committees, followed by a well-versed contingent of inspectors to start discussions rolling.

Garfield Johnson also hit the road to field questions—a move seen by his opponents as a promotional sales tour, but one which he insisted was by public invitation.

The report's top priority is the creation of an effective school "climate" which is identified as "warm and open", a climate which nurtures self-esteem by recognizing each child's limits.

Schools which measure success only in academic pass rates and physical prowess in competitive sport alone come under attack.

On the material side, the committee calls for urgent modification of existing school buildings to incorporate "aesthetically pleasing" features which capture student imagination.

The committee noted that most school washrooms lacked soap or clean towels and states that lack of finance is not an excuse for endangering children's health. Also noted, the report deplores "sniffing school tuckshops which ignore nutritional foods."

The committee's Maori representation comes to the fore in a proposal to promote the "whanau"—extended family philosophy by breaking down large secondary schools into small units which help develop "aroha", loving, caring relationships.

Public debate, however, has focused on two chapters of just five pages dealing with sex and religious education in the report's model teaching environment.

The committee endorses the



Children at an Auckland kindergarten: how will the major new report affect their social development?

Mr Ross Committee's recommendation for sex education in primary schools as part of an integrated human relationships programme. This, including suggested co-operative instruction for pupils, has caused hysteria among Johnson's most vocal opponents.

COME, the Council for Organizations for Moral Education, was conceived by retired secondary school inspector Mr David Elliot-Hogg of Tauranga, to campaign against the report's implementation.

COME membership includes the Society for the Promotion of Community Standards, the Family

Rights Association and SPUC, the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child—all known opponents of the Johnson report.

In spite of the brickbats, Garfield Johnson exudes enthusiasm for "the high level of public debate" he says they "appreciated" and "has more to do with precluding love in the community than religion."

Some school principals "have come out strongly in favour of the report's emphasis on a parent school and community partnership approach to social problems."

Teacher groups generally are supportive, with certain reserva-

tions about the planned introduction of a non-sectarian dimension to sex education along with the demand for improved physical education.

The Post Primary Teachers Association praises the committee's "divergent approach" and "demands for improved physical education. So too does the New Zealand Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, which looks forward to being part of a bright new era."

Unfortunately the new era did not get underway last year when the report was released, leaving little room for material Johnson needs.

Universities suffer cash cuts

Like the rest of the developed world, New Zealand faces problems of inflation (currently running at about 15 per cent) and rising unemployment. It also faces problems of agricultural protectionism in its major lamb markets.

The 1979 budget, presented in June, was one of restraint. The education budget totalled NZ\$938m (£426.5m). Net expenditure on education in the financial year 1978-79 was NZ\$929m.

Education cuts have fallen primarily on the six universities. In May the Minister of Education, Mr Merv Wallington, announced a reduction of 3.6 per cent in the Government's grant to universities, from NZ\$110.5m to NZ\$107.5m.

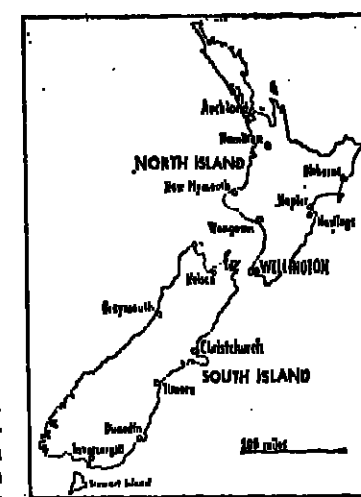
"The universities are being asked to do no more and no less than other sectors of state activity. And that is a restraint at the moment," Mr Wallington said. "We already have a degree of rationalization... there are only a limited number of engineering schools. There's only a limited number of medical schools. There's only one dental school. We may well have reached a time in New Zealand where we have to extend that principle across other courses."

It was reasonable to consider close departments, he said. "Some of the romance languages... those sorts of areas (are) where there is considerable duplication from university to university."

The chairman of the vice-chancellors' committee, Dr Robin Irvine, and other vice-chancellors feel the cuts could have "alarming repercussions," causing a fall-off in research work and a general lowering of teaching standards.

Draft legislation is currently under consideration to introduce tuition fees for overseas students. But student grants are to be reduced. All eligible students will receive a tertiary study grant of NZ\$23, and a supplementary grant of up to NZ\$17 a week will also be available.

Budget priorities include more teachers in schools for the intellectually handicapped, additional kindergarten teachers, and improved school transport.



Ngaio Crequer on a successful integration programme

Private schools grafted on to state system without pain

Private schools in New Zealand are gradually being integrated into the state system in a surprisingly painless and politically non-partisan way.

The success comes down to one factor—lack of coercion. Detailed plans for scores of schools are now being drawn up as a result of the 1975 Private School Conditional Integration Act (amended 1977) which enables these schools to join the state system.

There are more than 400 private primary and secondary schools in New Zealand, compared with more than 2,500 state schools.

A large majority of the private schools are primary and 75 per cent are Catholic. Central government provides 50 per cent of teachers' salaries in private schools. Most of these schools are single sex.

The initiative to integrate came from the Labour government in 1973 which wanted to find a fair and equitable solution to the vexed question of the extent to which the state should aid private schools.

Mr John Jolliffe, director of integration at the department of education, said, referring to an early conference: "It brought together a whole range of people of different religion and philosophy, and the outcome: a mixed bag who had not sat down and talked for 100 years."

Ultimately the idea was taken over by the National (Conservative) Party who eventually brought the Act into force. It was an unusual achievement considering the emotional first stirred when the proposals were made.

Under the Act private schools may voluntarily be integrated and become a full part of the state system. The state undertakes to protect the special character of the schools, that is its particular religious or philosophical tradition.

"This clause was of crucial importance for the Catholics. Indeed, at one stage the Bill was commonly referred to as a Catholic integration piece of legislation. Ironically none of the first four schools integrated were Catholic."

The Catholics had early doubts but they were reassured when they could retain their diversity. They agreed wholeheartedly to integration. The Bishop went so far as to declare that they wanted all their schools integrated at once. "It would be impossible but now they are making plans for their first 60 schools to make the move across."

Father Catchewill, assistant executive director of the Catholic Education Office, said: "It is a very advanced piece of social legislation which recognizes the rights of the minority to be different."

"We are seeking a partnership and diversity within the unit of education. We are looking for a sharing of everything we and the state have for the betterment of the children, and to get out of a ghetto system."

The changeover will be a financial boon for them. Some of their private schools are small, old and inadequately financed. They are unable to attract the right staff.

The Act tries to appease all. It lays down that schools can give preference of enrolment to the "faithful", that is, to children of parents who have a religious or philosophical connection with the school.

But subject to the above, no child should be refused enrolment on grounds of religion, race, socioeconomic background or unwillingness to make financial contributions.

This has been labelled a so-called "cheating clause." Teaching unions in general are in favour of the bill, pointing out that it would exclude neighbourhood children and create an exclusive area financed by the state.

The original intention was that tuition fees at these schools would

not be necessary. There was no mention of them in the draft bill. But it was quickly realized that many private schools had substantial debts.

So the Act introduces a curious scheme of "attendance dues". School proprietors may charge parents such dues to pay for improving buildings and facilities or for meeting debts. The Minister of Education must approve them.

In theory these dues could disappear and at least one school has elected not to charge them, but in practice it is believed that most will charge.

One of the conditions of integration is that a school must bring its facilities up to state school standard. This is a serious financial problem for some and may mean they will not be able to integrate, even if they wish to.

But if the Catholics are happy, other denominations are not. Many of them are not convinced that the special character of private schools will be maintained.

Earlier this year all the non-Catholic private schools in Wellington came out against integration. Many others have said no, or are biding their time.

They argue that the community will soon be a diminishing minority.

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Longer dole queues mean new attempts to bridge the school to work gap

by Lindsay Hayes

High unemployment and a growing number of young people on the dole have brought renewed calls for a coordinated approach to the question of bridging the gap between school and work.

In a recent report looking to the 1980s, the New Zealand Planning Council, a government advisory body, recommends more support staff in schools to tailor basic skills programmes to pupils' immediate employment needs.

The council suggests a 12-month optional vocational preparation course for intending school leavers.

Vocational preparation teachers should include people with a background in industry, familiar with trade training and qualified to teach basic reading and numerical skills. They should help students with social and psychological problems.

The recommendations are under consideration by the Government. Meanwhile the Education Minister Mr Mervyn Dainton has ordered a survey to determine the content of present career education programmes in schools, with a view to developing a special curriculum to strengthen the link between school and work.

The teachers are cooperating, but are more interested to know what the minister plans to do about what they say are the increasing number of disruptive pupils in the classroom who are becoming extremely vocal about their disenchantment with the curriculum.

Some say the two are closely aligned and suggest that improved vocational courses will reduce pupil aggressiveness.

In response, three-pronged proposals were announced in October

to help teachers cope with disruptive pupils.

The proposals will operate in selected districts next year and consist of off-campus programmes to guide pupils from school into employment through a curriculum of work experience and social skills; schemes to provide a second classroom teacher to pick up learning problems at an early stage; and units where pupils can be withdrawn from the classroom if necessary.

Announcing the moves, the minister said he would not have teachers, particularly young men, harassed by adolescent louts.

The Post Primary Teachers' Association chose the "school to work" theme for its annual principals' conference this year. The speakers, who included the planning council chairman, Sir Frank Holmes, the former Federation of Labour president, Sir Tom Skinner, and assorted industrialists, all pressed for more cooperation between schools and outside parties.

But the education department's attempt to unite employers, schools and trade unions in a joint monitoring network to oversee work exploration programmes, has met criticism from the teachers and principals involved.

The schemes run for the last couple of years by about 45 of the 260 state secondary schools provide one-day-a-week, release programmes or block courses for pupils in local industries.

This has worked well on a small scale, but the increasing number of schools operating the schemes has sparked off unrest within the trade union movement.

The department's schools supervision director, Peter Culliford,

believes work exploration is a "sensitive" area. He said the establishment of a national advisory committee of educationalists, trade union representatives and employers marked the beginning of a genuine partnership between the parties.

A network of local committees will monitor work exploration activities on a district basis from next year.

The teachers who presently liaise with local employers to find pupils placements, say they have neither the time nor resources to fill out the required departmental forms or consult the proposed committees.

The department has now seconded a secondary school principal to implement the new scheme in consultation with the principals. The result is a relaxation of the implementation methods set out in the earlier official circular to schools which the department now admits was "too mechanistic".

The new approach is believed to provide greater consultations between teachers and the committees on the scheme's operation.

However, the Post Primary Teachers' Association says it will not support the new scheme until teachers received some form of reimbursement for the work involved.

Schools' individual efforts to ease pupils into work were given new impetus this year with a NZ\$200,000 government grant to help schools organize pre-employment programmes for pupils returning reluctantly to class after failing to find work. Fifty-nine are now running improved schemes with extra equipment and staff.

One example is the programme at Hunt Valley Memorial Technical College, near Wellington, which has the equivalent of half a full-time teacher and NZ\$300 for course materials under the scheme.

Eight of the initial intake of 17 students have been placed in full-time employment and the school is confident the remainder will follow before the year is out.

In terms of assistance for needy pupils, the college has run an alternative unit for children with behavioural or learning difficulties. This designed like a house with a fully equipped kitchen, dining room and lounge, takes 14-year-olds for three-year success-oriented courses towards full employment.

Here a billiard cue is as important as the blackboard. Pupils are given recreational and creative tasks, play card master, and eased into an elementary knowledge of reading, writing and mathematics.

Another Wellington school, St. George's College, in a predominantly Polynesian area, has won praise from employers for its achievement in work preparation. In addition to an employment programme with a high placement rate, the school runs an off-site manual skills centre.

Motivation for the centre came from pupils, former truants from a



Schools should tailor basic skills programmes to pupils' immediate employment needs, the New Zealand Planning Council says.

number of schools, who moved into a fire-damaged house with the help of community friends and proceeded to teach themselves manual skills.

The house was provided at a house by funds from friends of the pupils transferred the building with wallpaper, paint and carpet into a school of their own design, teaching themselves by trial and error.

Four months later the education department officially recognized the self-help efforts and brought the centre under the umbrella of the Porirua College board of governors. A college teacher, Maori, and known to the pupils, was transferred to map out a programme in consultation with the pupils to improve their literacy and job opportunities.

Most of last year's foundation class has graduated to employment and newcomers are working their way through the curriculum of domestic training, concrete laying, mechanical and building skills.

The Maori Affairs Department

has launched its own educational drive in schools to broaden the career opportunities of Maori and Pacific Island pupils, and to reduce the 70 per cent drop-out rate.

A pilot vocational training scheme is being tested by Maori unions. Led by Mr Bill Maitua, who, with a team of Maori and Pacific Island adults, is taking pupils through firms and industries to point out the career options available through with job placement.

But the Post Primary Teachers' Association says more effort is needed firstly to fill the gaps in the curriculum, and secondly to ensure that the pupils are motivated to learn. The association also points out that the curriculum is not being taught in a way that is relevant to the pupils' lives.

The association claims that the NZ\$1,000,000 school improvement scheme announced this year by the ministry will place emphasis on but not teachers in schools who do nothing to reduce the shortages.

Groups cross swords over religious rights

Continued from page 33

to teenage pregnancy and the basis of moral teaching in schools.

COMB's founder-secretary, Mr David Elliot-Hogg, a retired regional schools inspector, is trying to establish affiliated branches around the country to help draft human development and relationship programmes. COMB wants traditional groups like Boy Scouts and Girl Guides represented on the official advisory panel which will be charged with developing programmes for use when the national effort is implemented.

The Concerned Teachers' Association, formed nine years ago, aims to monitor the activities of the other groups which it claims are imposing their religious values on state education. It is temporarily in recess.

The CTA crossed swords with the New Zealand School Committees Association recently after the latter questioned the association's right to dictate to communities the nature of their religious beliefs.

The CTA, which sees itself as the protector of religious liberty and freedom of conscience, came out of recess in a hurry to demand a public retraction. Apart from defending its integrity, the CTA is promoting its watching brief under another name, the Committee for the Defence of Secular Education.

The CDE objects to the participation of Churches Education Commission clergy in school programmes and is urging the education department to investigate the activities of all officers in religious teaching.

Education Act and points out the rights of parents to withdraw their children from religious instruction.

Likening the commission to a "religious salesman", the CTA alleges it has moved in on a school audience and "encroached" on the religious instruction programme during the official hours of the schools.

It is because of those beliefs that the defendants are vehemently opposing the integration of independent schools into the state system. The fear is that the religious instruction of the school system will be lost.

Kaleidoscope of civilized centuries

GORMAN STAFFORD reviews filmstrips in 'The Adventure of Man' series

The Adventure of Man
The Ancient and Classical Worlds
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Each double-frame filmstrip with handbook, £3.20. Cassettes, £2.25 each. Newsheets, 85p for pack of five. Visual Publications, The Green, Northleach, Cheltenham GL54 3EX.

The Adventure of Man is a major publishing venture providing humanities resource material on topics from the Creation to the Renaissance. The project, in its early stages, is an ambitious one. Thirty-six titles have been published, 16 on the ancient and classical worlds and 20 on the medieval world. New Adventure of Man titles will be published at six-month intervals until the series is complete, when there will be about 120 titles.

The series provides a complex course: individual sections provide material for those with specialized interests in English, history, art, classical studies, and religious education. It is not possible at this stage to do more than convey the flavour and indicate the direction the project is taking.

The supporting material recognizes teachers' impatience with the inflexibility of packaged kits. Explanatory material is tailored to meet specific classroom needs, and publishers' interests are not served by limiting the market in terms of age and ability range. So the narrative in the booklet and in the optional cassette is directed towards younger students, further information provided on each frame permits teachers to take the discussion to higher levels. The narrative is framed in the centre pages of the booklet for easy photocopying, an interesting change of direction on the part of the publishers.

Material for schools has been more concerned with the results than with the skills of archaeology. This is rectified in a valuable unit (13/1) which seeks to pinpoint the techniques of the archaeologist through a series of on-site studies. There is much to learn here. Sensible observation, patience and care



remain the essential requirements for a scientific approach to the available material. The section on identification includes an excellent account of carbon-14 dating and its implications; exactly how bones can tell us what people ate and how they lived. The notion of the unconscious evidence of former societies, "digging up people" rather than objects, puts his work in context. Digging up History (13/2) explains why so much pre-Greek and pre-Roman building came to be underground.

The achievements of Heinrich Schliemann and Sir Arthur Evans (6/1) illustrate the fruits of archaeological study; equally important they allow us to explore the process whereby tales and myths become actuality. Until the late nineteenth century it was generally believed that Greek mythology had no connexion with truth; this certainly is the assumption behind the presentation of the tales of Heracles (6/2), Theseus (6/3), and Troy (6/4). Schliemann, having selected his site in part for her enthusiasm for Homer, turned his skills to the now famous sites at Troy, Mycenae and Tiryns. It is a good human story, not least because Schliemann was such an improbable character. Evans, by contrast, had all the right credentials. The palace of Knossos and the clear picture of Minoan civilization which emerged established further the need for a fresh approach to the early history of the Mediterranean. The study and prac-

tice of history is certainly dynamic in this context.

Explorers in the Ancient World (5/3) illustrates perfectly the dilemmas in the study of this period. A kaleidoscope of travel, a time-scale of centuries, inconclusive second-hand evidence, all make it hard to see continuity or measure effects. Exploration rarely feels like a human activity (Pythias's comments on the British climate, perhaps). The treatment is critical and the amount of detail and mental leap required is enormous.

Julius Caesar (10/2), "a small-scale study of a very great man" is the only person so far to warrant a unit to himself. He is portrayed as much more than the bloodless, systematic gladiator to which he has so often been reduced. Events are on a grand scale; war, intrigue, dictatorship, assassination—few classroom will fail to respond to the accelerating drama.

The study of Medieval Villages (12/1, 12/2, 12/3) is seen through the eyes of the priest, John de Fermcote, priest of the parish of

Admund at Bury eventually held property in 250 towns and villages, including half the county of Suffolk. Teachers will be grateful for this substantial resource bank. The quality of the reproduction is outstanding; the suggestions for further work for students are everywhere a serious contribution to the classroom activity and of the topics covered are already well resourced; the units on the Normans (18/3 and 18/4) add little to a familiar theme. The series is the work of Cyril Peckett, who has written a uniform approach. Control and direction, however, are purchased at the price of a certain predictability.

The series is the work of Cyril Peckett, who has written a uniform approach. Control and direction, however, are purchased at the price of a certain predictability.

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This is an ingenious but essentially simple device which can be of great use to all involved in teaching mathematics. The Macrotracator is a circle of clear film, type-written material 15cm in diameter, clearly marked with some of the features of the traditional protractor, plus the film strip.

The Macrotracator naturally costs more than the standard protractor obtainable from school suppliers. But it is larger, more detailed, more durable and much more versatile.

The full range of its uses is explained in the 32-page booklet, which contains suggestions for use in all work, beginning, calculation, and the construction of bar graphs, plotting, map-making and diameter measurement.

Jim Anthony

World citizens

A World Studies Centre, to house resources for teachers wishing to put their subjects in a wider perspective, has opened in Southampton.

It is hoped that members of the public will use the centre, which is a joint venture between the United Nations Children's Fund, the Overseas Development Agency and the local education authority.

Further details from Branwen Lewis, World Studies Centre, St. John's School, Castle Way, Southampton.

A2 drawing boards at a special low price of £2.90 are being offered to "pioneering students" by Robinson Hardin Ltd. They are made of chipboard, 16mm thick, finished in impolished apple or oak veneer.

The company also manufactures, at standard prices, portable units with a parallel motion system. Further information from David Robinson, Robinson Hardin Ltd., Cromwell Road, London SW13 6BQ.

Help for disabled

A competition to devise "the most ingenious project to help the disabled by means of information technology" has been announced by the organisers of Information Technology '80, a European conference and exhibition to be held in Monte Carlo next year.

The competition is open to schools and independent students (up to eighteen years of age) who should submit a written outline supported by the necessary plans and illustrations—not later than June 1, 1980.

The judges, headed by Lord Snowden, will make their decisions on the basis of the ingenuity of application of the new technology and the degree to which the idea is likely to help the disabled person lead a normal life. The term "information technology" is taken to include all forms of transfer of information both electronically and by means of fibre optics.

Prizes will include a trip to Monte Carlo during the exhibition. Information Technology '80: Executive Conference Organisers Ltd., Acorn Studios, London, SW13.

Fossils and relatives

Children visiting the Natural History Museum over the Christmas holidays will be able to visit a centre specially designed for them where they will be able to undertake a number of different activities including nature quizzes, bark rubbing and looking through microscopes. They will also be provided with work sheets to take into the public galleries.

One of the exhibitions that they will be able to visit will be "Dinosaurs and their Living Relatives" which has recently opened and which contains fossil skeletons and realistic models, one fifth life-size, of dinosaurs, as well as display cases pointing the links with the dinosaurs' nearest living relatives, birds and crocodiles.

The centre will be open from Tuesday, December 20, to Sunday, December 22, 1979, and Wednesday, January 2, to Saturday, January 5, 1980 (inclusive).

Further information from Len Moore, Head of Visitor Resources, British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD.

Life for Geordies

by Gillian Thomas

"What was kept in the Town Hurch?"

"What is the average height of the Castle stairs?"

Children in Newcastle-upon-Tyne are being encouraged to take an interest in their environment by Town Teacher, an urban studies centre, set up under the auspices of the Council for Environmental Education.

"When children study their surroundings they begin to enjoy them more—even the inner city areas," says Mike Federon, project leader.

"Moreover we feel they will make a better contribution to society if they understand and feel involved in the planning process. But teachers need back-up materials and helpers to be able to undertake work on the environment."

Providing the back-up at Town Teacher are six unemployed teachers, a graphics artist, a photographer and graduates in planning and environmental sciences. Their resources include photographic and printing equipment, and they work closely with local teachers' centres.

They also aim to initiate class work on aspects of Newcastle by providing material to encourage children to go out and discover things for themselves.

During the summer holidays, children from all over the city took part in an archaeological dig at an old station in nearby Gateshead. This was coordinated by Newcastle University and revealed some old foundations and pottery, as well as generating a lot of enthusiasm.

A resource pack on Wasteland Plants in the most comprehensive project so far and is relevant to all city schools. With information sheets on 30 common weeds, it explains how and why weeds flourish in such hostile conditions: pavement and rubbish dumps. It is available to teachers (£5.50 plus 25p p. and p.) either through the CEE at the University of Reading, London Road, Reading, or direct from Town Teacher.

Project sheets and teachers' notes on the "Dig" are available from the Centre and medieval Newcastle are among other resource material. There are also several town trails, including two which are maths based.

Town Teacher, which is sited on the historic quayside in the heart of Newcastle, opened another centre recently at Branding Junction Railway Station, Gateshead. Reputedly the oldest passenger station in the world it has been renovated specially for the purpose.

Both centres are open throughout the year on weekdays and local teachers can book them as bases for "streetwork" sessions. The only charge is for materials. The Manpower Services Commission grant expires in March and Mike Federon is currently working to organize alternative funding.

Town Teacher is at 25 Queen Street Quayside, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

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